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THURSDAY, MARCH 27TH, 2014

COED-Y-MWSTWR HOTEL - Pages 16-17

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See Page 25 for details of our weekly Facebook Competition...

RHOOSE BOWLING CLUB Page 22

AM's plan for big wind turbine riles up villagers

by PHILIP IRWIN

RESIDENTS in St Hilary are up in arms about a massive wind turbine that they say will overshadow the village and be seen for miles around the Vale.

A planning application has been submitted to the Vale Council by Greenfinch Investments of Stroud, for a wind turbine at Garn Farm, St Hilary.The turbine will be 99.5 metres high, from the ground to the tip of the turbine, and will be visible on the A48, on the opposite side of the road from the existing St Hilary radio/TV transmission mast.

At 99.5 metres high, it will be not quite half the size of the radio mast, which is 229 metres.

Nevertheless, local residents are outraged, and opposition is building. One resident, who lives and works opposite the proposed site, told The GEM that she was shocked at the size of the turbine, and felt it was completely unsuitable for the area.

Cian O'Connor, the managing director of Greenfinch Investments, told The GEM: "We can confirm that we have applied to the Vale Council for planning permission to erect a single renewable energy wind turbine.

"Subject to a successful planning application, we will progress the decision to deliver 0.5MW of clean renewable energy, enough to power approximately 500 homes".

David Daniels, who lives in St Hilary, told The GEM that he was supportive of green energy, but felt that this turbine would be in completely the wrong place.

He said: "It will be visible over a radius of 20km, on prime agricultural land in an area encroaching into the rural Vale landscape.

"It will also have the potential to set a precedent for further development."

Another St Hilary resident said that she would be lodging an objection and added that the farm already had a solar farm operating, and said the residents had not opposed that.

• *Local residents said that Garn Farm was farmed by Andrew RT Davies, the Welsh Conservative Leader and a regional AM.*

The GEM asked Mr Davies' office for a comment but, as we went to press, none had been received.

CRICKET TEAM BOWLED OVER!

Cowbridge Comprehensive's year-7 and year-8 girls cricket team, pictured above, were recently in action in the Lady Taverners competition. To find out how they fared, look out for next week's GEM!

Search goes on for post office premises

AFTER last week's shock announcement of the closure of the Spar store in Cowbridge, there is still no news about the search for new premises for the post office.

Last week, a Post Office spokesman announced a "temporary closure" and said that a new home for the Post Office was being sought.

Meanwhile, Vale MP Alun Cairns and regional AM Andrew RT Davies have both pledged to work with the Post Office to find new premises.

Mr Cairns said: "Several local businesses have been in touch with me already to discuss hosting the Post Office when it closes, which makes me optimistic that a solution can be found.

"This is positive news for local residents and I will continue to discuss the way forward with the Post Office over the next few weeks.

"Ideally, they will work proactively with local independent traders, rather than with nationwide chains to secure a new home for the Post Office. Cowbridge has a wealth of well-established independent businesses, all of whom reinforce its unique market town character."

St Hilary resident Andrew RT Davies AM also said it was vital that any replacement continued to offer a full counter service. He said: "First and foremost, it is important that everything possible is done to try and find an alternative venue for these services in Cowbridge.

"Cowbridge is a bustling, thriving community, and the full counter service offered in the Spa was both necessary and extremely well used.

"While a temporary closure may prove to be unavoidable, residents will certainly expect every effort to be made to ensure that the range of services available to customers is not cut back when it reopens".

DEATH AT NASH POINT

A MAN was found dead at Nash Point last Sunday, South Wales Police reported.

In a statement, they said: "At 8am on Sunday, March 23, South Wales Police and Coastguard recovered the body of a male person from the beach at Nash Point.

"An investigation is ongoing; however, the death is not being treated as suspicious. Enquiries are being made to inform the next of kin. HM Coroner has been informed".

daisy & jack
CHILDREN'S EMPORIUM

Daisy & Jack and Stella & Dot invite you to a 'Mummy & Me' Fashion Event

Come along to Daisy & Jack, 79 High Street, Cowbridge, CF71 7AF on **Saturday 29th March** for an exclusive 'Mummy & Me' Fashion Event.

Join us at 2pm prompt & enjoy the fashion show, the fun for you and your little one!

Goodie bag for first 30 to arrive.

Enjoy special offers at Daisy & Jack and get your hands on boutique style jewellery and accessories from Stella & Dot.
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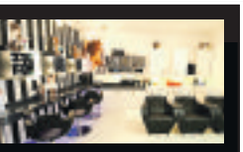

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So pop in and say hello, we're looking forward to seeing you!

Readers' Letters

Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, Don John, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL or email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

IMPORTANT: We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. ***Letters and e-mails MUST include full address and a contact telephone number***. An email address alone is not sufficient! We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested.

Who cares for young dementia sufferers in Vale?

YET again, I feel I have to write about the lack of age appropriate care for younger onset dementia sufferers in the Vale of Glamorgan.

When will our council realise that unless action is taken soon, this situation will be out of control?

Last year, 100 people in Cardiff and the Vale were diagnosed with this dreadful disease. That number has already increased to 150, with more waiting for diagnosis.

Apart from the assesment unit at Llandough hospital, the excellent Ty Hapus in Barry is the only day care facility in the Vale specialising in younger onset dementia; and respite or continuing care is a joke, because there is no appropriate care in this area.

We are promised a unit for sufferers in Barry Hospital, and although there is care for ladies, we are still waiting for care for men.

Meanwhile, we are told of places in Cardiff that would take our loved ones, mostly Whitchurch or Llanishen... Fantastic! But what happens if you have no transport? What if there was an emergency and you have to fight your way through traffic? How would those living further afield in the Vale cope?

It's not good enough!

We need a facility here in the Vale, close enough for family to reach, and sufferers to feel close to home – and that does not mean placing them in care homes for elderly patients.

Younger people have different needs, are often totally mobile and wanting to be active, so to put them with older people would be so unfair to all concerned.

Part 1 of the Mental Health Measure places a statutory obligation on health boards and local authorities to work together to deliver an 'ageless' local primary care mental health support service, and I understood there is also a duty of care.

Really?

So what exactly is our local authority doing to give our hard working carers a rest? Not a lot it seems!

If anyone out there would like to join me to fight for appropriate care for our loved ones, they are welcome to contact me through The GEM. Maybe an action group is the way forward.

Pat Hopkins,
Barry.

Llandow road to recycle and ruin

I wholeheartedly agree with GEM reader, Gary Shaw – the access road to the Llandow site is at the present time, treacherous and ruinous to the vehicles of the council taxpayers encouraged by the Vale Council to recycle our waste.

It would be appreciated if our council representatives and Alun Cairns MP could visit the site and give us their opinion.

This particular problem has been highlighted on a number of occasions in The GEM, yet little progress seems to have been made. Action please!

Terry Rooney,
Llantwit Major

Grateful thanks

I WOULD like to thank the two gentlemen and a lady who came to my aid when I fell in the car park at Lidl stores in Barry.

I was not quick enough to ask their names, but would like them to know that I was grateful and apart from a few cuts and bruises, and obviously I was shaken up, I did not suffer any lasting injury. Thank you once again.

Mrs Primrose Goldsworthy, Llantwit Major

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'Ystradowen go-ahead is a warning to every Vale village' says reader

LAST week's GEM report on the council approving an application to build 40 houses in Ystradowen should be a warning to every village in the Vale.

The field in question lies outside the present settlement boundary around the village. The boundary is meant to be in place till the new LDP takes effect in early 2017.

However, the Vale Council has found a way of getting round that protection by using a Welsh Government guideline which permits a council to override the boundary if it does not have a five-year supply of housing land.

This has been a handy way of working its way through a growing list of Vale villages with LDP candidate sites: so far, Fferm Goch, Ystradowen, Culverhouse Cross; the next likely one on the council's hit list is Colwinston, where a planning application has just been made by a developer.

By this planning sleight of hand, the council acts as judge and jury in its own case, thereby avoiding having such candidate sites being assessed in the quasi-judicial independent inquiry by the Welsh Government's LDP inspector in 2015-16.

That is not the end of the problem about the integrity of settlement boundaries in the rural Vale. It is not generally understood that the present Labour-dominated council is proposing in the draft LDP that the settlement boundaries currently around most Vale villages are scrapped in early 2017, when the LDP takes effect.

This was also the policy of the previous Conservative council in their LDP plans.

This will mean that from that time on, Vale villages will be entirely at the mercy of this council regarding windfall applications.

There have to be very great concerns about whether the whole character of the rural Vale is under unprecedented threat from 2017 if the boundaries go.

Finally, what will happen when imminent local government reorganisation replaces the Vale Council with a Cardiff-dominated Cardiff and Vale Council short of building land in the city – and let loose on a rural Vale bereft of settlement boundaries, removed by an irresponsible Vale political class?

Paul Jeremy,
Ystradowen.

'Don't blame the UK Government for tax rise' – *says Tory councillor*

THE Welsh Government, under Labour control, is entirely to blame for steep rises in the Vale Council's council tax levels.

I had the privilege of sitting on the Vale Borough Council and South Glamorgan County Council during the last three years of their existence from 1993-1996.

It was obvious from the outset of local government reorganisation, that the Vale was always going to be the poor partner of Cardiff in the future, whilst the capital city forged ahead with much higher financial annual settlements.

To blame a former UK Government that was in power decades ago for this month's massive council tax rise in the Vale is both ludicrous and incorrect. The Welsh Government has had the power to increase the amount of money it gives the Vale annually on some 15 different occasions, yet not once has it done so, despite having the Welsh Government's Finance Minister actually living in the Vale!

I can understand why the Llantwit 'Indies' wish to apportion blame on anyone except their own associates in the Labour party in Barry, but they really ought to get their facts right before blaming the previous administration, who by and large, did a good job in difficult circumstances.

Anthony Ernest,
Penarth.
Conservative councillor,

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'Merger would be disastrous'

LAST week, the Vale Conservative group tabled a motion in full council opposing a merger with Cardiff, as recommended by a recent Welsh Government commissioned report.

We didn't do this to protect our own jobs, nor was it done because we oppose attempts to streamline local government in Wales.

We did it because we firmly believe that a return to the bad-old days of 'South Glamorgan' would be a disaster for the Vale.

The cost of politics needs to be reduced and we have to find ways, as a council to save money – and to ensure that we spend every penny of your money wisely.

But submerging the Vale into a Greater Cardiff region will put our towns and villages at a disadvantage, heightening competition for limited funding, and lead to the decimation of our green areas as we take on a greater share of housing to meet Cardiff's much greater need.

Like Coun Clarke, I was angry that residents were hit by the council with a huge council tax rise, but the way to prevent that from happening again is to campaign for fair funding from the Welsh Labour Government – not to merge our council with our much larger neighbours.

Coun John Thomas,
Leader, Vale of Glamorgan Council's Conservative group.

Fallen short on actions...

I WAS appalled to learn that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has decided to increase its council tax by 4.5 per cent.

This is yet another example of politicians taking taxpayers for a ride. What adds insult to injury is that the rise in the Vale is above the Welsh average of 4.2 per cent, itself well above the English average of 0.6 per cent! Indeed, many councils in England have frozen council tax altogether.

Why is it that the Vale Council feels the need to hit families with more tax at this difficult time?

Some have blamed the cuts on the Welsh Government, but these are proportional to the cuts being made in England, where there is very little or no rise.

A number of politicians have made a big deal of the cost of living crisis, but when it comes to action and not words, they've fallen short!

JE Pearson, Barry.

'SUPPORT OUR LOCAL TRADERS!'

ALTHOUGH many locals are concerned about the closure of the Cowbridge Post Office, the staff at Spar must also have our concern and sympathy.

This is one of a few shops in the town who are open 365 days a year and trade from 6am until 11pm daily (including Sundays).

We owe it to all the local traders to give them our support as customers.

Not everybody likes to shop at the multiples in town and prices are not always as competitive as might be thought.

So remember your local greengrocer, butcher, newsagent – all have given good service for many years. They need your support to keep trading in the town, or we will lose them, too.

As for the Post Office, none of the aforementioned traders would have enough space for that business, with its long queues during busy periods – and the cost of one of the new empty shops would no doubt be prohibitive.

So, are we off to Llantwit Major for our pensions, etc?

Mike Wilcock,
Llanblethian.

Funding for Wales cut by £1.7 billion

IN his Viewpoint column in The GEM last week, MP Alun Cairns wrote that it was outrageous that councillors didn't campaign against their own party and support him and his fair funding campaign.

He says they put party interest ahead of local interest. My question to Mr Cairns is, did he put party interest ahead of his constituents' interest when he supported party policy to cut Welsh funding by £1.7 billion?

This cut has caused hardship and problems. The need for a large increase to council tax in Wales is because of this funding cut that was imposed on the Welsh people.

Why didn't he show support for his constituents by voting against? He should tell us what cuts to services he would make if the council tax rise was lower.

Nobody likes the 4.5 per cent rise, but we should protect the most vulnerable from cuts to the services they need.

G Smith,
Llantwit Major.

'Don't park in a disabled space'

I AM getting very annoyed at the number of people parking in spaces clearly designated for the use of the disabled – while not displaying the necessary badge.

This is completely thoughtless. On one occasion last week, two of five designated spaces at Waitrose were occupied by vehicles without a badge. I have photographs of these and others and am considering naming and shaming.

Please consider those who need these spaces, before being so uncaring.

Bob Wheatley, Barry.

HIGH TIDE TIMES
(UNTIL APRIL 3)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time AM	Ht M	Time PM	Ht M
27 Thur	03.08	8.4	15.44	8.5
28 Fri	04.11	9.1	16.43	9.2
29 Sat	05.05	9.7	17.29	9.9
30 Sun	06.52	10.2	19.17	10.1
31 Mon	07.37	10.4	19.55	10.3
01 Tues	08.18	10.4	20.37	10.3
02 Wed	08.59	10.2	21.14	9.9
03 Thur	09.37	9.8	21.51	9.7

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

E-Mail Contacts: *gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk* • *gemsales@tindlenews.co.uk* • Tel 01446 774484
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CAN YOU FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THESE IMAGES FROM THE PAST?

COWBRIDGE History Room is appealing for information about these interesting photographs from the town's past.

***Cowbridge Dramatic Society – early 1950s**: Left to right, back row: 1. ?, 2.?, 3.? , 4. Mr Bishop (Bish), 5. Mrs Miller, 6. Bryn Edwards, 7. Mrs Flo Hinton (Goldie,) 8. ? Postmaster's wife. Front row: 1. ?, 2. Douglas Medhurst, 3. Gwilym Punter, behind with dog, 4. Maisey Burton, 5. Dr R Brown Miller (seated), 6. Betti Punter, 7. Lynda Edwards, 8. ?, 9. Bill Anthony, 10. Molly Williams, nee Palmer: Glyn Thomas in the centre front.*
The photograph was donated to the Cowbridge History Room by Tim Edwards, formerly of Woodlands Close and now Melbourne, Australia, whose mother Lynda is seated centre right.

***RIGHT**
Cowbridge Dramatic Society – early 1950s: Left to right, back row: 1. ?, 2.?, 3.? , 4. Mr Bishop (Bish), 5. Mrs Miller, 6. Bryn Edwards, 7. Mrs Flo Hinton (Goldie,) 8. ? Postmaster's wife. Front row: 1. ?, 2. Douglas Medhurst, 3. Gwilym Punter, behind with dog, 4. Maisey Burton, 5. Dr R Brown Miller (seated), 6. Betti Punter, 7. Lynda Edwards, 8. ?, 9. Bill Anthony, 10. Molly Williams, nee Palmer: Glyn Thomas in the centre front. The photograph was donated to the Cowbridge History Room by Tim Edwards, formerly of Woodlands Close and now Melbourne, Australia, whose mother Lynda is seated centre right.*

Local firm to rescue as storms damage the welcome banners

The banners again proclaim 'Welcome to Cowbridge' – thanks to a local firm that came to the rescue after the recent storms damaged the old ones beyond repair...

THE severe storms over the Christmas period uprooted trees, overturned caravans and caused widespread damage.

They also ripped and damaged beyond repair the brand new 'Welcome to Cowbridge' banners sponsored by the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council and the Cowbridge Charter Trust.

The banners were intended to fill the blank periods when the two banner poles in the High Street were not in use advertising any functions, such as the Food Festival, the May Day Fayre, the Vale Show, the Reindeer parade etc. but all was not lost – when local printing firm, Infographics, on hearing of the disaster stepped in and offered to replace them free of charge!

However, even they agreed that the new banners may not stand up to the exceptional winds experienced in those recent storms.

Harry Hailes of the Cowbridge Charter Trust was quick to accept Infographics' offer and joined the Town Clerk, Mr Andrew Davies, in thanking them for their generous gesture especially in today's economic climate.

Aspiring composers in school concert

SEVEN young music students at Cowbridge Comprehensive School will have short compositions played by The Welsh Sinfonia – as part of a collaborative concert with the school orchestra on Friday (March 28), at 7pm.

The Welsh Sinfonia's composer in residence, Michael Csanyi-Wills, has been working with Catrin Howells, Verity Belle Atkinson, Hannah Gaskin, Matthew Upcott, Eleri Morgan, Molly Groves and Olivia Chester.

They have written pieces for a small, unusual, group of seven instruments – violin, double bass, clarinet, bassoon, cornet, trombone and percussion – the orchestration for Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale Suite*, which The Welsh Sinfonia ensemble will play after the interval.

The school's band will perform a selection of well-known film music in the first half, with the Welsh Sinfonia ensemble, conducted by Mark Eager. This will be the fourth time the professional orchestra has joined forces with the school's musicians; they have previously worked with the whole orchestra, and with vocal and instrumental soloists.

Each concert has demonstrated just how much the young musicians can achieve with hard work and commitment, and Michael Csanyi-Wills is very complimentary about the way in which his young composers have responded to a rather unusual commission: "It will be interesting for them to hear what their compositions sound like 'in real life'; they've responded well to the challenge. They've all got important music exams coming up, and I hope this exercise will stand them in really good stead."

Tickets available from the Cowbridge school's box office (01446 772311) and David Barnes Dry Cleaners.

CADS prepares to stage Broadway hit

***THE God of Carnage*, the Broadway hit which starred James Gandolfini in his final role, will be staged at the Market Theatre in Cowbridge over three nights – April 12-14.**

Market Theatre is the official home of CADS, the Cowbridge Amateur Dramatic Society and this is their annual spring production; CADS hope it will introduce more theatre fans to Market Theatre. Doors open at 7.30pm, leaving time for drinks at the bar before the curtain goes up at 8pm.

Tickets cost £6.50 from WG Davies Newsagent, 38 Cowbridge High Street, or on the door.

CADS is currently seeking more members to take part on stage and behind the scenes. To find out more, go to www.market-theatre.com or come to the next Clubnight in the theatre on May 9 at 7.30pm.

Council news

AT last week's meeting of the town hall committee on Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council, plans were discussed for a First World War exhibition in the town museum, planned for September of this year.

The museum plans to contact local residents to put together a collection of personal mementos and exhibits.

HIRING FEES

The council has decided to freeze hiring fees for the town hall and lesser hall for the coming year.

Club has insight into history of Dyffryn Gardens

PONTFAEN Probus Club launched its 2014 speaker season with a very informative talk by the head gardener of Dyffryn Gardens.

Despite the familiarity of many club members with this local attraction, Alex Luker introduced new and insightful facts about the history of the gardens, including background on its celebrated designer Thomas Mawson and the Cory family, who commissioned the project in the late 1800s.

More than a century later, thanks to Heritage Lottery funding, extensive restoration activity has been undertaken, and continues under the National Trust's stewardship.

The gardens' own staff of eight are helped by volunteers from around the Vale, aiming to reinstate the garden to its original magnificence.

The club is formed of members coming from professional or business backgrounds, who are now semi- or fully retired. To learn more of the Club, contact secretary Colin Wilson on 01656 860498. **LTG**

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Lisa & Kelly are relocating to Fontygary Leisure Park, Rhoose
Join us on Sunday 30th March 4-6pm for our opening celebrations
We will be open for business Tuesday 1st April.
We would like to thank our loyal customers and look forward to seeing them in our new salon.
Please call to book your hair appointments.
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The Fairtrade Fortnight allows pupils to show their great taste!

CHILDREN at St David's Church in Wales Primary School, Colwinston, recently celebrated Fairtrade Fortnight and the Fairtrade committee opened the event by leading an assembly.

A spokeswoman said: "Fairtrade Fred advised shoppers on the brilliant ways that we can help to make the lives of producers and workers in the developing world better through the purchase of Fairtrade products.

"Parents, grandparents and local residents were invited in to sample the produce and 'Friends of St David's' brewed up a tasty selection of Fairtrade tea and coffee, sourced from ethically managed tea and coffee plantations around the world.

"Each class took part in various Fairtrade activities, raising awareness of trade issues as part of their global citizenship education."

BONT FAEN WI TRY OUT CURLING

HOT on the heels of the Winter Olympics, ladies of Bont Faen WI enjoyed their own opportunity to get down and get curling on March 20, minus that much-needed brush!

Every member wanted to try their hand at this popular sport and the Lesser Hall was laid up with targets at either end, spectators sitting along the side walls, and teams of two trying their best to beat their opponents.

Discs containing ball bearings fell short, overshot or glided smoothly on target. In knock-out style and with a very competitive edge, our first-time visitor Hilary Hills outdid members and scored the highest points of the night closely followed by Diana Bennett, Mary Hopkins, Glen Brookfield, Jan Riddell and Miranda Davies.

The evening was deemed a great success. Thanks to Margaret Price for keeping us all under control and keeping score!

Tonight, March 27, members will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the group in the Town Hall, providing a lavish buffet for invited WI link groups (past and present) and special senior WI guests.

Almost 100 WI members will look back, enjoy the present, and gain momentum for the future. We shall enjoy and report back next week! **JH**

COULD LLANDOW NEWYDD PLAN STILL FIND FAVOUR WITH COUNCIL PLANNERS?

Report by PHILIP IRWIN

WHEN the Vale Council's list of alternative candidate sites went live last week, one familiar proposal was under consideration.

The massive Llandow Newydd proposal, which was first presented over 12 years ago, was turned down by Vale Council planners in March 2009.

The developers took the refusal to a judicial review, where the Vale Council won after the appeal was dismissed.

However, as the new round of Local Development Plan (LDP) consulation continues, the site is back once again as an alternative candidate site

As with all such candidate sites, the Vale Council has emphasised that none has the backing of the council, but legally the council has to pursue this consultation (*See Coun Neil Moore's column this week, page 13*).

However, one thing that has emerged in recent weeks is a groundswell of support for Llandow Newydd as towns such as Cowbridge and Llantwit Major, along with smaller communities such as Ystradowen, all come to terms with the possible arrival of new housing developments.

Residents in Cowbridge, for instance, have discovered an enthusiasm for Llandow Newydd that was not there five years ago.

What has changed, of course, is that a number of housing developments are being proposed in and around Cowbridge.

Similarly, people in Barry, Sully and Dinas Powys resent being asked to take the bulk of the housing allocation in the LDP, so a development at Llandow that contributes 2,750 homes would have supporters in the eastern Vale.

When Llandow Newydd was first proposed, it included 2,750 homes, including affordable housing, a full range of services including both an English and Welsh speaking primary school, a village centre and several small 'local centres', a possible park and ride scheme, health and leisure facilities and significant areas of public open space including playing pitches covering some 17 hectares.

A by-pass around the village of Llysworney was also part of the scheme.

The proposals also included provision to retain and enhance 18 hectares of woodland and 'informal open space' of ecological value, together with the retention of as much existing hedgerow as possible.

In addition, the project promised to make land and funding available to provide healthcare facilities and, in conjunction with police, fire/rescue and ambulance authorities, would provide necessary premises and facilities to improve local emergency services provision.

JRC Jewellery have recently opened in Cowbridge High Street

New chapter opens in Cowbridge

JRC JEWELLERY, the family-run jewellery retailer ,has doubled its number of retail outlets after acquiring a new unit on Cowbridge High Street, supported by Barclays.

The £55,000 investment has created two new jobs and will double business turnover to £250,000 in 2014.

Established in 1992 by owner John Mahoney, the business has traded from a jewellery stall at St Tydfils indoor market for the last 22 years but decided the time was right to expand and give daughter Rowena a more prominent role in the business.

John Mahoney, owner of JRC Jewellery, said: "When I left the army, I needed a new profession and always had an interest in jewellery and stumbled into taking on the jewellery stall in Merthyr: 22 years later we still have the stall in Merthyr which has done very well.

"We now begin a new chapter with the retail outlet in Cowbridge serving a very different market and clientele.

"We offer a fresh and inspiring range of jewellery from quality British designers pieces for every budget ranging from £25 to £5,000."

MONTEVERDI *AT ST DONATS*

AT St Donat's Art Centre on Friday, April 4, The Welsh Camerata choir, which draws its members from Cardiff, the Vale and further afield, will be performing madrigals by 17th century composer Claudio Monteverdi, directed by the early music specialist Andrew Wilson-Dickson, and accompanied, in some pieces, by musicians playing period instruments.

Monteverdi (1567 – 1643) wrote madrigals (or short secular choral pieces) over most of his life, and this concert features highlights from throughout his career. The words he chose to set in his pieces run the whole gamut of human affection, and the development of his style through these pieces charts the seismic shift that took place in musical language from the Renaissance to the Baroque.

Book cover design competition winners

ABOVE and BELOW: The competition winners receive their prizes.

TO celebrate World Book Day (March 6), Cowbridge Library ran a bookcover design competition over half term when the winners were:

Age 3-7 category – first prize, Grace Kent; second prize, Megan Withnall.

Age 8-12 category – first prize, Lucy Goodwin; second prize, Anwen Jones.

The photos show local author Michaela Weaver handing out the prizes.

Cowbridge Librarian, Melanie Weeks, reported: "The children worked really hard on their book covers and the standard was really high. Congratulations to everyone who took part."

All entries are currently on display in the foyer of the library.

The Benifice Parochial Church Council of Llantwit Major is presenting a Petition for the granting of a Faculty to provide flood defences for St Donat's Church. The defences will consist of a removable barrier at the churchyard gates and a low barrier wall to protect the sunken entrance to the church boiler room.

Any person, body or society wishing to make representaions regarding the proposals must do so in writing to:

Care of Churches Department, Llandaff Diocesan Office, The Court, Coychurch, Bridgend, CF35 5EH

within 28 days of the publication of this notice.

Signed by the Petitioner: Robert Smith, Joint Secretary, St Donat's Church.

Family hope the gang who attacked their 'vulnerable' son will be caught

A local family have been left frustrated that no one has been caught by the police following an assault on their son, who is a vulnerable adult, and his girlfriend.

GEM REPORT by TIM CHAPMAN

There has been recent Government concern about how police deal with offenders with learning disabilities – in this case it is the victim who has learning issues and poor health.

The police have emphasised they are still investigating the incident and urged any witnesses or people with information to get in touch with them.

The incident took place at Pencoedtre Park in Gibbonsdown, Barry, on Monday evening, February 24, at around 8.30pm.

Kane Takata, aged 20, and his 17-year-old girlfriend were approached by a group of youths and kicked and punched.

Kane told The GEM: "I was walking with my girlfriend across Pencoedtre Park when a youth asked for a lighter. We said 'We don't smoke' and he kicked my girlfriend in the back.

"She went down on the floor bruising her legs. I helped her up and one of them punched me in the ribs three times.

"When my girlfriend took off her hood, they could see she was a girl and they apologised and said 'No one hit you, the wind blew you over'."

It was dark, but Kane says his attackers were probably aged around 16 years old.

The assault was reported to the police at 9pm, but Kane said he was disappointed the police didn't get in a car and go down to the park because he believed the attackers might still be there.

The police said an assault would be logged and told him to get in touch if he had any further information.

Kane's mother Sharon was so upset she put appeals on-line. Kane is a vulnerable adult with learning difficulties and has had very serious health problems, and she was keen to see the perpetrators brought to justice.

Sharon explained: "Later that evening, at around 10.15pm, I spoke to police in Cardiff and asked why they hadn't sent a car out, and the woman said they didn't know what emergencies might be happening elsewhere that would require cars."

Sharon said: "I put something on Facebook and a woman got in touch to say her son had seen it happen.

"We were given three names which we passed on to the police. But the police want the witness to come forward and he is too frightened.

"The police saw Kane about a week later at our house and said there was nothing they could do if the witness did not come forward.

"It would have been good if my husband and I had been able to meet the police with Kane. The police know he has learning difficulties and does not explain himself too well. We were travelling home from work at the time and did not realise they were coming. No one has been held accountable for what happened and I am worried this group might attack someone else."

The police told The GEM that following the complaint made by Kane, officers went to the area, conducted a search and examined CCTV images; however, there was no-one in the vicinity.

The police say they are continuing to investigate the assault and are appealing for anyone who may have any information about the incident which occurred in the Pendcoedtre Park area at around 8.30pm on February 24 to contact them.

Local policing inspector Chris Owen said: "Incidents such as this are very unusual and we want to hear from anyone who can assist us in our investigations."

Contact Barry police station on 101, or anonymously via Crimestoppers, on 0800 555111 (quote reference 1400063214).

Tractor Boys look back on successful run

THE Tractor Boys of Aberthin, in association with Inscape, staged a tractor run on February 16 in memory of the late David Rees, formerly of Inscape.

The run attracted a terrific turnout of tractors of all vintages and resulted in £1,350 being raised for the Welsh Air Ambulance.

Spokesman Steve Davies said: "In excess of 75 tractors left JG Plant's yard, the business having been recently acquired by Inscape, at around 10.30am.

"The tractors were split into two groups, with the smaller vintage tractors led by route master Martyn Huish, and the larger tractors being led by Martyn's son, Owain.

"The convoy left the Brackla Industrial Estate and travelled over to Pencoed via Coed y Mwstwr, passing through Brynna and turning left at The Eagle Pub before proceeding up and over Mynydd-y-Gear and dropping down into the Ogmore Valley. A well earned refreshment break was taken at Blackmill.

"The return journey saw the tractors head for Heol-y-Cyw, passing up and over the common and dropping down into the village of Coity before heading to the Brackla Cafe, where a tremendous carvery lunch was enjoyed by all. Here a raffle added a further £128 to the cash already collected.

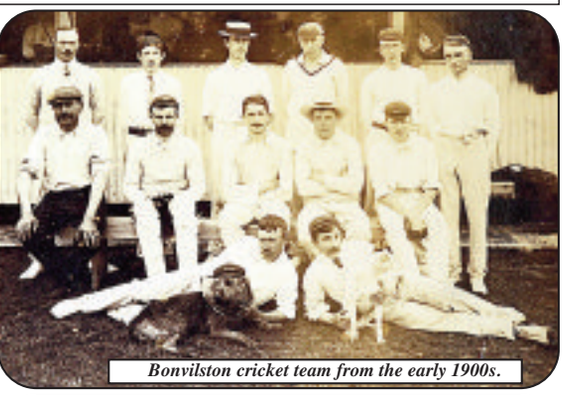
"Following on from this run, a very well-supported presentation evening took place at The Farmers Arms, Aberthin, the Rees family presented a cheque for £1,350 to Catrin Hall of the Welsh Air Ambulance.

"Many thanks to all those individuals who took part in this run , in particular to Martyn Huish and Ray Jenkins for organising the route, Jeff Webb and Linda for providing tea, coffee and cakes at the start, Caroline Langford for collecting entrance fees and organising the raffle and Gareth and Owen of JG Plant for the use of their yard.

"A big thank you also to Brackla Cafe for excellent food served very efficiently."

HISTORY OF BONVILSTON CHURCH GOING ON SHOW!

RIGHT: Paul Fisher in front of the display at St Mary's Church.



Bonvilston cricket team from the early 1900s.

The Red Lion, Bonvilston.

AN exhibition in St Mary's Church, Bonvilston, charts the history of the village from earliest records to the present time.

It centres on wall panels, graphic displays and a floor covering featuring the 1877 Ordnance Survey map, which allows visitors to take a virtual walk through the village.

It has been put together by a group of villagers and was made possible thanks to a £3,400 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a £9,000 grant from the Pride in Our Heritage programme, awarded by the Creative Rural Communities in Cowbridge through the Rural Development Plan for Wales.

Paul Fisher, one of the history group behind the exhibition said: "The aim of the exhibition was to bring the history of the village into one focal point and create a sense of place for villagers and visitors alike.

"It recognises the importance of St Mary's Church as the place where everything begins and ends – it is in the centre of the village and is the oldest building, dating back to Norman times.

"We are delighted with how the exhibition has turned out and we hope that it is going to attract more visitors to the church and to the village."

Information and pictures used in the exhibition came from a number of sources including the Glamorgan Archives. Sketches, pictures and memories of the village have also come from local people and others who used to live in the area.

"We have had donations of old pictures and even sketches dating back to 1840 which might have otherwise been lost but now they are here for everyone to see," said Mr Fisher.

"There has been lots of interest already in the exhibition which will be a permanent fixture in the church. We have five history panels on the walls, but these could be added to in the future as more information is gathered.

"Our next step is to set up a website for information that we have not been able to include in the exhibition and is something that we will look at applying for further funding for."

The project has also enabled a book written by former landlord of the Red Lion, Charles Deere charting his recollections of early 20th century life in Bonvilston, to be republished.

The exhibition will be open to the public from March 31 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm).

AY

CARDIFF CROWN COURT ROUND-UP by AJ SICLUNA

Man used a fork to stab his drinking partner COURT TOLD

AN ATTACKER who used a fork to stab his victim, has been jailed for 10 months at Cardiff Crown Court.

Gareth Brooks (43) of Holton Road, Barry, admitted causing Nathan Garner actual bodily harm.

Prosecutor Jason Howells said that the victim had lived in sheltered accommodation.

Sometimes, the two men would drink together. On February 6, there was a dispute and Brooks was heard shouting: "I'm going to stab you in the throat, I'm going to kill you." Some time later, he threatened him and stabbed him three times in the right shoulder with a fork.

Brooks' solicitor, Ann Griffiths, said the victim didn't require hospital treatment and Brooks had a degree of mental disorder.

Mr Justuce Wyn Williams told Brooks: "This incident took place in a hostel for vulnerable people. Your victim was vulnerable, and so are you."

He said the wounds were minor, but it could have been a lot worse.

Local man jailed for 'horrendous' lighter fuel attack

A MAN was subjected to a "horrendous" attack, when a drunken friend sprayed him with lighter fuel and ignited it.

Seconds later, John George (30) repeatedly punched the victim, Paul Hamer, Cardiff Crown Court has been told.

George, of Bryn Du Road, Kenfig Hill, was jailed for three years and three months.

He pleaded guilty to attempting to cause Mr Hamer grievous bodily harm and was in breach of a community order for battery.

Recorder Peter Griffiths told him: "You pleaded guilty to a very serious charge for which there are no sentencing guidelines.

"You subjected this man to an absolutely horrendous assault. You sprayed lighter fuel over him, lit it and beat him up. The court cannot ignore what you did."

Prosecutor Tony Trigg said that on February 6, George went to Mr Hamer's flat unexpectedly in Kenfig Hill.

They had known each other since childhood. He said Mr Hamer let him in and they chatted for some time.

"Without any warning, he then sprayed him with lighter fuel and ignited it. Mr Hamer pulled off some of his clothing, and George then repeatedly punched him and bit an ear."

Mr Hamer succeeded in escaping and ran to a neighbour for help.

George, who was drunk, claimed falsely that Mr Hamer had caused family problems.

In the past, he said, Mr Hamer had given the defendant guitar lessons.

George's counsel, Kevin Seal, said that a combination of the death of his mother and the break-up of a relationship had made his life spiral out of control.

He added: "He is genuinely remorseful and is disgusted by his behaviour. When arrested, he was heavily intoxicated and angry. In prison, he is about to start an anger management course."

When he is released, said Mr Seal, he wants to make a positive start in life.

BURGLAR SPOTTED ON FACEBOOK...

A BURGLAR was identified after he was spotted on Facebook, Cardiff Crown Court has heard.

Aron Taylor (22) of Richard Street, Barry, was jailed for 14 months after he admitted burgling premises in Lombard Street, Barry.

He also admitted being in breach of a conditional discharge for shoplifting.

Said Mr Justice Wyn Williams, "You are a young man and you burgled premises where the occupants were a young couple and a baby. To your credit, once you were disturbed you left without making any threats."

He said the aggravating features were that he had previous convictions for burglary and robbery.

"I have no option but to sentence you to immediate imprisonment."

Prosecutor Hoa Dieu said that on December 29, Taylor broke into the premises.

One of the occupants, Rakesh Momi, was asleep on a sofa but was awakened by the presence of Taylor standing in front of him.

The front door had been left unlocked and Taylor made off with a games console and a bottle of vodka.

A police dog later tracked Taylor's scent to Richard Street and Taylor was later spotted on Facebook.

He was arrested and made full admissions.

His solicitor, Derek Gooden, said "He is under no illusion that the sentence will be custody. He co-operated fully and has the benefit of a family behind him."

He was ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £100.

Author gives thriller talk at local library

Welsh author, Penelope Evans, recently visited Cowbridge Library to give a talk on the art of thriller writing. She is pictured with town librarian Melanie Weeks.
(*Photograph by Mike Wilcock*).

Welsh language pre-school playgroup gets funding boost

A COFFEE morning was held recently by members of Merched y Wawr Cowbridge, to raise funds for local Welsh language pre-school playgroup, Cylch Meithrin y Bontfaen.

Vale MP Alun Cairns went along and explained: "I have long been a supporter of Cylch Meithrin, campaigning alongside The GEM to gain funding for their site behind the leisure centre some nine years ago.

"I met a number of parents and children who currently attend the playgroup, many of whom popped in to enjoy the homemade Welsh cakes on offer!

The fascinating epitaph in wake of Bligh mutiny

ON March 18, Dr Alastair Cooper at Dinas Powys Probus Club gave a talk entitled '*In the wake of the Bounty.*'

Dr Cooper took a degree at Cardiff University in marine studies, is a master mariner, and author of several histories of marine matters.

His talk related to events leading up to and beyond the mutiny, explaining the reasons why it occurred and the consequences.

The *Bounty* was originally a collier, 90 feet long by 23 feet broad, and had a crew of 39 plus Commander Bligh.

The purpose of the voyage was to gather 750 bread fruit plants from the Pacific island of Tahiti and take them to the West Indies to feed the slaves. The main characters in the tragedy were William Bligh, (aged 33), Fletcher Christian (aged 23), and Tom Ellison, a 15-year-old foundling.

The ship sailed in 1787: Bligh came from a fairly humble background but had become a very skilled navigator and marine cartographer. Unfortunately, he was blessed with an extremely bad temper.

Christian was from a family who were part of the establishment in London society and he resented being criticised by Bligh in front of the crew. The planned five-month voyage to Tahiti took 10 months due to bad weather and because they arrived after the growing season had passed, there was a further five months delay.

During the extended stay, the crew formed relationships with the local girls and were reluctant to leave. Bligh's bad temper did not help and eventually the crew, led by Christian, mutinied: 14 were actual mutineers, but 25 wanted to remain loyal to Bligh, including Tom Ellison.

Bligh and 18 supporters were put into a 23 foot long-boat – there was not room for any others and Tom had to be left behind.

They were given bread, rum and water and lived on fish and any birds they could trap. They were facing a voyage to safety of 35,00 miles, with only very basic navigational equipment.

Fortunately, Bligh, the expert navigator and a strict disciplinarian, made sure that the meagre rations were fairly shared out, and he brought all the men to safety at Timor Island in the Dutch East Indies. Bligh then returned to London and was treated as a hero.

Mutiny was regarded as treason in the Royal Navy and the mutineers knew that if caught, they would be hanged.

Those still loyal to the Crown were returned to Tahiti to await rescue, but Christian took the mutineers to Pitcairn Island which, being so remote, would be a safe haven. The *Bounty* was burnt so no escape became possible.

The Admiralty then sent Captain Edward Edwards, who had Welsh connections, on the ship Pandora to hunt out the mutineers. The crew numbered 136, including marines to deal with any trouble.

When he arrived in Tahiti, he was regarded as a rescuer, but he placed all the survivors in chains and condemned them to the bilges, refusing to listen to their claims that they had not mutinied.

He was a brutal man with no sentiment. He banned hymn-singing and prayers, believing them to be mutinous chants.

After a fruitless search for the *Bounty* and the mutineers, Edwards set sail for home but *Pandora* was wrecked on the Barrier Reef and 40 men drowned.

At the subsequent court martial, presided over by Admiral Hood, three were sentenced to death, the others transported for life. Young Tom Ellison, was one of those three. He had learnt to read and write during his time in goal and wrote to Admiral Hood, swearing his loyalty to Bligh and pleading for mercy. However, the Crown was determined to have its revenge and poor Tom was hanged at the yard-arm.

The mutineers who had settled in Pitcairn, together with native Tahitians and women, did not live for long. Jealousy and alcohol caused fighting amongst them, and they were all dead within a few years.

Descendents of the original settlers, about 30 in number, remain on Pitcairn and depend on financial help from Britain to survive.

The vote of thanks was given by Malcolm McGuire.

Why Chris and Linda are Bermuda-bound!

CHRIS BALL, proprietor of Llysworney Garage Ltd on the B4268 between Pentre Meurig and Llantwit Major, will be closing his garage doors for five weeks tomorrow (March 28) to travel across the Atlantic for a very special event. His daughter Katie and son-in-law Adam (Richards) who are both practicing barristers in Bermuda, are expecting their first child in early April, and Chris and wife Linda are travelling to welcome their first grandchild into the world in person!They will be back to reopen the garage as usual on May 6.

Vale pioneers new service at hospital

A NEW service at Barry Hospital has been launched to help to reduce delays in leaving hospital and cut hospital admissions.

The Vale Community Resource Service (CRS) offers one point of access to services that can help people avoid hospital admission or get them back into the community after a hospital stay.

The service created by the Vale Council and Cardiff and Vale University Health Board allows a co-ordinated response to each referral.

Stuart Egan, deputy Leader of the Vale Council and cabinet member for adult services, said: "Integrating these services means that local people are getting support and help more quickly, this means less hospital admissions, because people receive care as soon as they need it. It also leads to quicker discharge from hospital as the support services people need to leave hospital are promptly ready to help them. Integrating services in this way benefits patients and makes savings for both the NHS and the council."

At the official opening ceremony Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas AM, said: "The Vale of Glamorgan Community Resource Service is at the forefront of the Welsh Government's proposals to improve care and support services for vulnerable people through more collaborative working across health and social care and with key partners in the third sector."

Basil Watkins presents the Mayor with her Bingo 'dabber', watched by Edwina Leake (raffle) and Haydn Painter (chairman).

Bingo! Mayor collects her dabber

AT the beginning of last month's meeting of the Royal British Legion in Cowbridge, to tremendous applause, in walked Coun Gwen Baty, Mayor of Cowbridge with Llanblethian and her consort, Mr Geraint Baty.

As she was wearing her priceless badge of office, Heidi, and six members of the posse, were deputed to act as her bodyguard.

At such important meetings, the Mayor is normally preceded by the Mace Bearer carrying the mace. However, it was felt more appropriate to present her with a Bingo 'dabber' instead.

After circulating, she enthusiastically got down to the serious business of playing bingo. Despite being infuriatingly close on a number of occasions, she did not have the good fortune of beginner's luck!

Neither did she win on the raffle; so at least, she does not have to declare any unsolicited gaffes to council!

She certainly enjoyed herself, as indicated by her kind remarks, in her column in The GEM last week.

So, 'After the Mayor's Show', why not join us for the next session on Thursday, April 3 at the Lesser Hall, Cowbridge Town Hall. Doors open 7pm. EYES DOWN' 7.30pm. Bingo, raffle and succulent food. Don't forget to bring your own wine!

Breaking news

THE main raffle prize, kindly donated by Mr Julian Hitchcock, is a voucher for £50, which may be used at The Bear, Oscars, New House or Coed Y Mwstwr.

(Basil is presenting the Mayor with her

BUSY PROGRAMME AT PENSIONERS' CLUB...

Llantwit Major Pensioners have held successful meetings since the new year.

We have been entertained by Amy Brittain, which was delightful, also used our new projection gift and saw slides of animals.

The quality and sound of the system was excellent. Mike Welford helped us in setting up the system for which we were grateful.

We had a 40s – 50s musical evening with Tony Hill on his guitar. Mr Brian Sheal gave us a very interesting talk on the world of dogs and this was an authorative talk, as Brian has judged at Crufts. Trevor and Carol played duets on the piano and their choice of music was superb.

Llantwit Major ladies choir once again gave us a good range of music. They sang the 23rd psalm to Brother James's air, and ended the evening with 'Thanks be to God'.

This past week we have had the Ogmore Valley Male Voice Choir. They were superb and the choice of music was excellent.

The songs included 'You've Got a friend', 'Raise me up', and 'Love is a River'.

Their rendering of 'Unchained Melody' was good.

We had visitors from Hampshire which was lovely.

We have other attractions coming up, including Marianne and her songsters.

For more information on the club's activities, which include our first trip to Comeston Lake, and Cardiff Bay and the parks around Cardiff on April 29 (cost £12) contact Wilf Cole on 01656 890680 (chairman) or Primrose Goldsworthy (secretary) on 01446 794257; or why not come to Llantonian Hall on a Tuesday evening at 7pm where you will receive a warm welcome. **PG**

WHAT'S ON /*in brief*

Charity jumble

THE Llancarfan Ladies Tuesday Club will hold its top drawer jumble sale at Llancarfan Community Hall on April 5, at 1.30pm. All proceeds to charity, including Air Ambulance.

X-Factor auditions

THE X-Factor mobile auditions will be held on Saturday, April 5 at the former tourist information centre, Paget Road, Barry Island, from 10am – 3pm. 16 years and over only. *For terms and conditions go to www.itv.com/xfactor.*

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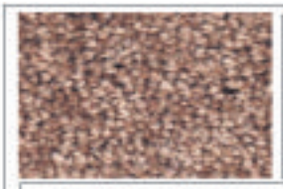

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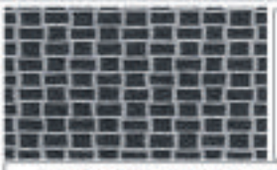

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£208,250 windfall for It's My Shout

IT'S My Shout Productions have been awarded £208,250 by Creative Skillets Cymru to help develop skills and talent in Wales.

The investment has been made available through Creative Skillets Cymru's Skills Investment Fund.

Pencoed-based It's My Shout, which is behind the Bridgend Youth Theatre, will work with a consortium of partners including BBC Cymru Wales, S4C and The Film Agency for Wales, to deliver training opportunities to up to 59 students from across Wales, in a wide range of production areas – from camera to sound, art department to hair and make-up – and will act as a resource for film and high-end television production in Wales.

It's My Shout Productions Ltd produced short films for television and screen for BBC Cymru Wales, S4C and the UK Film Council.

Huw Walters, interim director for Creative Skillset Cymru said: "It's My Shout's new trainee programme focuses on areas of production skills which are currently lacking in Wales.

"The new scheme will give people from all over Wales the opportunity to help meet this demand and form part of the media workforce in Wales; thus developing world-class talent which will not only contribute to inward investment, but also put Wales on the global map."

Rhodri Talfan Davies, Director, BBC Cymru Wales and chair of Creative Skillset Cymru National Advisory Board said: "It's My Shout has given thousands of young people across Wales a head start in the film and television industry – in front of and behind the camera.

"A large number of its former trainees are now working worldwide in the creative industries, and our own drama studios at Roath Lock in Cardiff are also benefiting from the talent nurtured by It's My Shout.

"BBC Wales has always been committed to developing new production talent – it's in our DNA – and we're proud of our long association with both It's My Shout and the Creative Skillset team.

"The launch of this talent pool for Wales is an important part of building the creative skills base here in Wales".

S4C's director of communications, marketing and partnerships, Garffild Lloyd Lewis said: "I'm really pleased that It's My Shout Productions have been successful with their funding bid to create a talent pool for Wales.

"This is the second year for S4C to support the It's My Shout project in Wales and this year we look forward to seeing three short films in the Welsh language produced by students working on the project in three communities in Wales.

"The investment from Creative Skillset Cymru is in addition to the It's My Shout Made in Wales film project, and S4C is proud to be part of this partnership project as we look to boost the development of creative talent in Wales."

PACT meetings

DYFAN PACT, Highlight Park Community Centre on Monday, March 31 at 7.15pm.

COFFEE & CHAT, The Six Bells, Penmark on Tuesday, April 22 at 11am.

COMMONWEALTH FLAG FLIES FOR FIRST TIME IN THE VALE

THE flag of the Commonwealth has flown for the first time over the Vale – at the Queen's request.

It is the first time in the UK that the flag has been requested to be flown outside London, bringing together 53 countries worldwide flying the flag to mark Commonwealth Day.

The Mayor of the Vale, Coun Mrs Margaret Wilkinson, was joined by Vice-Lord Lieutenant for South Glamorgan, Sir Brooke Boothby, as RAF personnel from MoD St Athan raised the Commonwealth flag outside the Civic Offices in Barry.

The occasion was marked with a short ceremony attended by Alun Cairns MP, Jane Hutt AM, mayors and councillors from across the Vale, and representatives from the RAF, Navy and Merchant Navy.

Coun Wilkinson gave a short address, followed by a message from the Queen, which was read by Sir Brooke Boothby.

The RAF St Athan Voluntary Band played both the national anthems of Great Britain and Wales as the flag was raised into position by Sergeant Lisa Millar.

Barry joined 200 other cities and towns throughout the UK who marked the event, as Glasgow prepares to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Pupils from St Helen's RC Primary School were also there to witness the event.

Erin Gamble (10) said: "It was really exciting and a great pleasure to watch. I didn't know too much about Commonwealth Day and the Commonwealth Games, but now I am looking forward to seeing them."

Harry Rose (seven) said, "I wouldn't have watched the Commonwealth Games, but I am going to now. This has been exciting seeing the flag go up.

The Commonwealth is made up of 53 countries that were once British Colonies and their residents make up a third of the world's population.

Jane Hutt with pupils from St Helen's School.

Coun Wilkinson and Sir Brooke Boothby.

Sgt Millar raising the Commonwealth flag.

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Plenty to celebrate, but we must rise to Vale challenge

'WE need to celebrate what we can achieve and have achieved in education in the Vale.'

That was the message given at my annual Spring Breakfast, by Professor David Egan, who is Professor of Welsh Education Policy and director of the Wales Centre for Equity in Education.

The breakfast event was attended by headteachers, governors, Vale councillors and officers, members of the Youth Service, the college and the local press.

Professor Egan also said that we need to be clear about the challenge in realising the potential of every child in the Vale and this requires leadership and engagement from the early years with families, communities, governors and parents, overcoming barriers and disadvantage, through Welsh Government programmes like Flying Start and Families First.

Our response to his inspiring presentation, was to consider the roles we all had to play in maximising the potential of children in the Vale, to meet needs and challenges.

This was my 14th Spring Breakfast held at Cardiff and Vale College in the Hospitality Suite in Colcot Road, Barry, cooked and served by students, providing valuable work experience as part of the course at the college.

I congratulated the students on their culinary and hospitality skills and told them that they had good job and career prospects to meet the growing tourism and hospitality sector in Wales.

I invited Professor Egan to speak at the 2014 Spring Breakfast, to guide and support us in our various roles and shared objectives, to seek to continuously improve education in the Vale from pre-school provision, through to college and work-based learning.

In my opening remarks, I said that since 2011, the Welsh Government has invested almost £3million in Vale schools and pupils, through the school effectiveness and pupil deprivation grants.

These provide financial support for our national priorities for schools – improving standards in literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

I also reported on the capital investment of almost £17million from the Welsh Government towards the Vale Council's school building programme, creating educational environments that are fit for purpose and for for the 21st century.

Coun Chris Elmore, cabinet member for children and young people, spoke of his vision for schools in the Vale with an increased commitment to providing additional capital from the Council's resources, year on year, to uplift the school building programme, to meet learning needs across the county.

The importance of community was strongly supported at the Spring Breakfast discussion, and I was delighted to attend the Barry Jobs Fair in the Barry Memorial Hall later that morning, organised by Barry Communities First, which was hugely successful in attracting people of all age groups who are seeking, training, work, advice and support.

With employers engaging with the 800 + participants in the Jobs Fair, who poured through the doors when they opened at 10am , this was a very successful event for education and employment in the Vale.

I was particularly pleased to talk to staff at the Careers Wales stand who were promoting job opportunities through the Welsh Government's £12.5million European-funded Jobs Growth Wales programme with a range of job opportunities for 16-24 year olds in Penarth, Barry and Cowbridge.

They were also promoting new apprenticeship opportunities in Aberthaw, Barry and Cowbridge in a range of sectors – more information can be obtained from 0800 0284844 or 029 20906800.

It is clear there is much to celebrate and promote in the provision of education in the Vale and we must rise to the challenge by providing the leadership and resources to back all those who teach, support and manage our schools, colleges and work-based learning in our county.

ASSEMBLY NOTES

by **Jane Hutt** AM *(Minister for Finance)*

Barry landscapes in new exhibition

MARTYN KAYE, headmaster of Croesty Primary School, Bridgend, is also an artist whose colourful landscapes of the Heritage Coast and Barry are on display at the Travellers Café on platform 1 of Barry Station.

The café is run by the charity Mind in the Vale, with the help of Vale Glamorgan Artists.

The exhibition may be viewed on weekday mornings from 8am – noon until May 9.

Tools With a Mission (Cymru)

TOOLS With A Mission (TWAM) which enables people to earn a living and to support themselves, collects and refurbishes tools and equipment no longer required in the UK and sends them overseas.

Last year, over 200 tonnes of aid (worth over £1m) was shipped from TWAM's distribution warehouse in Ipswich. TWAM Cymru collects and refurbishes equipment that is donated from across the south and west of Wales, sending some 30 tonnes of tools and equipment through Ipswich since the opening of our unit near Dingle Road railway station in Penarth in early 2010.

We deal with old and unwanted tools, as well as sewing and knitting machines and haberdashery. We are open each Tuesday and Thursday morning, between 9.30am and 12.30pm.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with the sorting, cleaning, refurbishment and packaging of donations, especially haberdashery.

For more information contact twamcymru@twam.co.uk or 07814 573696.

Andy Bowdler
(Tools With A Mission regional manager for south and west Wales).

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Ty Hafan family cuts the turf for new playground

A FAMILY supported by Tŷ Hafan marked the start of work on the charity's new desert-island-themed playground on Friday, March 14.

Jacob Ferriday (17) and his mum Sally from Barry, cut the turf at the hospice overlooking the Bristol Channel in Sully.

The entire space will be accessible for wheelchair users and every piece of equipment has been selected with integration in mind. The state-of-the-art facility will include a race track, wheelchair trampoline, wheelchair see-saw and bespoke lighthouse.

Sally said: "The plans look amazing and I'm sure the children will get so much pleasure from the new facility. We can't wait to see it completed!"

Tŷ Hafan's chief executive Ray Hurcombe commented: "We are delighted to be starting work on this fantastic new playground and it was wonderful to see Jacob and Sally mark the occasion at our turf cutting ceremony.

"We are passionate about providing our families with unique and enriching experiences and this is a fantastic example of Tŷ Hafan leading the way in children's palliative care.

"We could not complete projects like these without the generosity of our supporters and I'd like to thank our corporate sponsors and of course, the public, for their kind support."

Real Radio presenter Jason Harrold attended the ceremony, along with Johanne Stacey-Davies from Dow Corning. Real Radio's 'bring a £1 to work appeal' contributed £38,000 and Dow Corning donated £22,000 towards the new playground.

J L Harrison Enterprise Fund, Making a Difference Locally Ltd, The Waterloo Foundation, The Freemasons Grand Charity, Barclays Wealth, Mumbles Community Council, Co-operative Employee Benefits and Ortho-clinical Diagnostics also made significant donations towards the project.

ABOVE: Real Radio's Jason Harrold, Sally Woodham-Allen with her son Jacob Ferriday, Simon Peters from Real Radio, Johanne Stacey-Davies from Dow Corning and Tŷ Hafan CEO Ray Hurcombe.

GEM FACEBOOK PRIZE

Our GEM Facebook winner for March 20 is:

Janet Morgan

who correctly answered last week's question in The GEM. The answer was:

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'Cautious welcome' for passenger rise at Cardiff Airport

NEWS that Cardiff Airport has seen a 10 per cent rise in passenger numbers has been "cautiously welcomed" by Leader of the Welsh Conservatives, Andrew RT Davies AM.

However, "providing value for money would be paramount in making Cardiff Airport sustainable," he added.

The regional AM for South Wales Central, who has been an outspoken critic of the purchase of the airport by the Assembly Government, said: "Recent progress is certainly cause for optimism but these are early days.

"Passenger numbers are just part of the picture and to put this into perspective, based on Welsh Government spend to date, each new passenger equates to around £750 per head.

"What the airport really needs, beyond additional routes and passenger numbers, are competitive prices. When you hear from holidaymakers first-hand that it can be as much as £1,000 cheaper for a family of four to fly from Gatwick instead of Cardiff, it really puts the challenge into perspective."

Mr Davies also suggested that freight performance would be a vital indicator of recent performance, and hoped positive developments would enable Welsh taxpayers to receive a return on their investment.

"Freight is equally important as a gauge of an airport's success and it will be interesting to see what progress, if any, the Welsh Government has made in boosting volumes in the year it has run the airport.

"Ultimately, I hope that each new positive development will bring us closer to seeing some of this huge outlay returned to taxpayers' pockets, with the airport returning to private ownership," he added.

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Life and times of a liberated woman... (part 2)

by NANCY DAVIDGE

IN 1931, my family moved from the hustle and bustle of London to the tranquil village of Staunton in the Forest of Dean, near Monmouth.

It was indeed Utopia for my brother and myself. We could roam the forest, carving our names on the trees, watch the deer and other wildlife species.

We attended school in Coleford and one day my teacher told my class to write an essay on Horatio Nelson. On reading my work, my teacher accused me of cheating. I was made to stay behind to show where I had supposedly cheated.

I had not been dishonest, I was eventually allowed to go home with the threat I would be dealt with the following day.

I was walking the long, lonely road home when a van stopped and the driver asked me to get in, saying he would take me home.

I had been warned by my parents never to accept rides by a stranger. I began running back towards Coleford, looking behind to see the van turning with the intention I am pretty sure of abducting me.

I kept running. I saw the Monmouth bus approaching and fortunately the conductor was my friend's brother, who made sure I was safely in my own home, within an hour.

A constable from Monmouth came to my home asking for details of the van and driver. Who knows what may have happened if the bus had not arrived?

My parents insisted on an apology from the teacher, who was also suspended for some time. The fact was I did *not* cheat.

NEXT: ***The looming war years ...and my first love.***

COMMUNITY NEWS

Your local correspondent is ***NANCY DAVIDGE***
"Tynewydd", Llangan.
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TREOES, LLANGAN & ST MARY HILL

Llangan school

ON Tuesday (March 25) children from years 3 – 6 took part in a hockey tournament at Cowbridge Comprehensive School.

The children were hoping to meet former pupils from Llangan school.

Today, March 27 years 3 and 4 were invited to the Tesco Tythngwysa dairy farm to learn all about where food comes from!

Standstill

WORK at the former garden centre at Fferm Goch has come to a standstill, although all the former buildings have been demolished, also the glass structures.

All that remains is an enormous mound of sawdust, a notice on the perimeter fence seems to denote there is a possible change to the original plans.

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Suspended sentence for 'sophisticated' cannabis growers

REPORT by AJ SICLUNA

A sophisticated cannabis-growing operation in a flat in Pencoed was "nipped in the bud" when police officers carried out a search, Cardiff Crown Court has heard.

They discovered 14 plants with a potential yield worth £8,400, said prosecutor David Webster.

Ian Tomlinson (29) and Leon Young (27) of Caeau Duon, Pencoed, each admitted producing cannabis.

Each was sentenced to eight months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months. Tomlinson was ordered to carry out 200 hours unpaid work, and Young was ordered to carry out 250 hours unpaid work. Each was also made subject to a supervision order.

Judge Rhys Rowlands said: "Fortunately, this operation was nipped in the bud". He said the fact that they pleaded guilty was important. It was, he said, a reasonably sophisticated operation based in a garage.

Some of the drugs, he said, would have been supplied to others. The offence, he said, was not at the top end of this bracket.

Mr Webster said that on September 27, the police searched the premises and found 14 plants, fans and a basic watering system.

The defendants were not present and later surrendered to the police.

Young admitted the offence and said he was the owner of the flat in which Tomlinson also rented a room.

The plants were about two weeks old, with a yield of about £8.400.

Tomlinson was said to have a conviction for driving with excess alcohol and to have been cautioned for possessing drugs.

Young had convictions for violent disorder, causing damage, making threats and possessing Class A drugs.

The roles of the two, the court heard, were equal.

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Somerset farmers' benefit evening 'just like Christmas!'

GLAMORGAN YFC and Glamorgan NFU recently joined forces with NFU Mutual to raise money for Somerset farmers affected by recent floods.

The event was held at Barry Memorial Hall. Due to demand, extra space was sought, increasing the capacity to 400. Ticket sales made a significant start to the fundraising by making £7,000.

The evening was hosted by Glamorgan NFU chairperson, Abi Reader and Glamorgan YFC chairperson, Beth John and saw the seven young farmers' clubs entertain the guests in a variety of acts.

Opening the evening was Wick YFC who performed their recent entertainment 'Glam Air', followed by singing, dancing, comedy sketches and a performance by the Glamorgan YFC Choir, who are representing Wales in the national final in May.

Glamorgan NFU chair Abi Reader (left) with Glamorgan YFC chair, Beth John.

The finale was provided by current Glamorgan champions, Maendy YFC, performing 'Return to Paradise'.

This was a final dress rehearsal for the Maendy cast before they went to Llandudno to compete in the Wales finals.

Raffle tickets were available, and Philip Thomas (Herbert R Thomas) received bids from very generous guests.

Auction prizes were gratefully received from local and national businesses including BOCM, Countrywide, TH White, David Evans Agricultural Ltd, Watson Fuel, two local contractors, and vets.

Thirty auction prizes were offered in total, including items such as 10 acres of grass silage foraging, 20 acres maize drilling, 500 litres red diesel, 500 litres heating oil, two lawn mowers, fencing course, digger hire and skid steer hire.

The auction made £8,000, which has been estimated at 1.5 per cent more than its retail value.

The raffle was equally as successful, with calving survival packs, boiler suits, food hampers, a professional cake, pub lunches and gift vouchers. Numerous local businesses and private individuals got involved – not just those in agriculture but the wider rural community too.

Glamorgan NFU chair Abi Reader said: "It was like Christmas when the items started coming through the door."

The proceeds of the raffle provided an extra £2,000 for the fundraising pot.

Sponsorship for the theatre hire was provided by Bridgend NFU Ladies, as well has private donations from organisations such as The Vale of Glamorgan Show, Glamorgan Farmers Club, Glamorgan NMR Herd Competition, Glamorgan Iron Horse Vintage Society, while Glamorgan NFU contributed £4,000 to partly cover food costs and as a donation to the cause.

The night was a great success and an excellent opportunity for farmers, young farmers and the wider community to get together. It also proved that good can be done when organisations work together. The generosity people showed on the evening was incredible and a fine demonstration of farmers and their supporting industries standing together.

The grand total raised was a whopping £20,000, which will be donated to a special fund set up under the umbrella of the Addington Trust for a recovery fund for farmers.

HANNAH LEWIS

The GEM has joined forces with the Dogs Trust to find caring homes for dogs at the Bridgend rehoming centre.

Footie-mad Ole's goal is a brand new owner!

DOGS Trust Bridgend is appealing to dog loving football fans to help a very special four-legged footie fan win his perfect match.

Staff have named the playful pooch after footballing legend Cardiff City manager and former Manchester United striker Ole Gunnar Solskjær, who donated a recent TV appearance fee, along with club owner, Tan Sri Vincent Tan, to Dogs Trust.

The donations are helping the re-homing centre to care for 'Ole' and his friends as they wait for new owners to come along.

The three-year old crossbreed ended up at the Re-homing Centre in Bridgend through no fault of his own, when his owner was no longer able to care for him.

The footie-loving pooch is desperate to find a new best friend to play endless games of chase. He is a fetch fanatic who cannot resist bounding after a ball.

Like any footballer, he would also benefit from a little extra training, so needs a patient adult owner to help him settle in and become part of the family.

Playful Ole demonstrates his football skills...

Linda Feagan, Dogs Trust Bridgend Supporter Relations Officer explains: "We are delighted with the generous donation from Ole Gunnar Solskjær. We rely entirely on donations, which enable us to carry out our work and help as many dogs as possible. It will really help us care for our four-legged Ole and keep him in footballs while he waits to find a loving family.

"Ole is such a fun, mischievous dog who loves to show off with a football. He is bright as a button and a real bundle of energy, so will need an active owner to keep him entertained.

This bouncy lad needs a home with a secure garden to bound around in and would, of course, love a football to play with.

"He is a sweet natured boy who would be happy to curl up on the sofa and watch Cardiff City after a long day's play. We are really hoping that our Ole won't be left on the bench much longer – he is such a fantastic dog who deserves to find a loving home for life."

Anyone interested in re-homing Ole can visit *www.dogstrust.org.uk*.

Dogs Trust Bridgend has dogs of all shapes and sizes looking for homes, and staff will consider a wide range of homes and circumstances, providing that they fit the requirements of the dog and provide it with a loving, lasting home.

LINDA FEAGAN
(Supporter Relations Officer, Dogs Trust Bridgend)

NUT strike hits schools

THERE was confusion for parents in the Vale and Bridgend County borough yesterday (Wednesday) after the National Union of Teachers voted for a national strike in response to proposed changes by the Government to the teachers' pensions scheme, pay and conditions of service.

The effect was mixed, with both councils posting information in the morning about the situation.

More schools were affected in the Vale, where 11 schools were closed, and 28 described as partially open.

In Bridgend county borough, the early morning information was that four schools were closed, and six partially open.

Council measures are geared to protecting Vale's major services

VIEW FROM THE VALE

by Coun **NEIL MOORE** Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

SINCE my last column, the council has moved forward with various projects. As well as setting the budget – we have protected the major services and not made savage cuts, unlike other councils.

I should emphasise that we have been able to do this because of this administration's long-term budget strategy.

We have maintained funding for social services and we continue to work very closely with the health sector.

It was, therefore, my pleasure to open the new Vale Community Resource Service at Barry Hospital on March 20, along with the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Gwenda Thomas AM.

This is an example of collaborative working between the Vale Council and Cardiff & Vale UHB, and has enabled the team to be fully co-located in this superb facility.

This community-based integrated health and social care rehabilitation/reablement service is operated by both UHB and Vale Council staff.

They provide wide and diverse professional services and create a single point of access and contact for health, social care and the third sector services, allowing a co-ordinated response to individual users, speeding up these services, which helps achieve Welsh Government priorities.

LDP confusion

IN relation to the current stage of the Local Development Plan (LDP) process, there seems to be some confusion.

The council agreed its Draft LDP. It then had to follow the legislative process by consulting on that Draft Plan and receive any 'Alternative Sites' put forward, as an alternative to those in the Draft Plan.

All consultation comments and 'Alternative Site' suggestions have been received, logged and those comments/sites are on our website for inspection.

To complicate matters, we now, legally, have to ask for further consultation on the 'Alternative Sites' proposed.

I have to stress that these newly-suggested 'Alternative Sites' have not been agreed by the council.

I know that this has confused people, but we have no option but to ask for comments on those alternatives.

Once this second consultation is complete, the council can consider any 'Focus Changes' (if any) it needs to agree, always provided those changes do not deviate from the original strategy.

I understand that the process is complex, but we have to abide by the legislation in going forward.

If anyone has any problems, or wants to raise any issues, please contact the council, as indicated on our website, at valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/ldp.

Island progress

WE are continuing with the regeneration work at Barry Island which is progressing well.

Work is also under way to refurbish the Western Shelter toilets in time for Easter and the new tourist season.

In relation to further changes on the Island, it is also proposed that our tourism, events and Barry Island resort manager and their teams will be relocating to the upper floors of the old tourist information centre (TIC).

This will put our dedicated officers at the heart of this tourist resort, with the ability to also manage the other tourist areas throughout the Vale of Glamorgan from that base.

I think this is a very good use of a council building and will be advantageous to both traders and visitors alike.

It is also envisaged that the bottom floor could be leased to an organisation with a viable business plan at a reasonable rental, as can the resort manager's building on the seafront, which is soon to be vacated, as a result of this alternative use of the TIC.

Access work

IN another recently completed seaside initiative, the new Llantwit Major slipway, which gives better access to the beach, was recently completed and according to early reports, the good weather has brought many people out to enjoy the beach.

In relation to the access ramps to Whitmore Bay on Barry Island, work is on-going and they will be repaired as soon as possible.

Let's hope for a hot summer when we can all enjoy what I consider to be one of the best coastlines in Wales – and on our doorstep.

I suspect that many have noticed that work has begun on the road improvements from Gileston Cross to the Old Mill, St Athan.

This is long overdue and will make the road much safer for all users. Continuing with that theme, we have had further discussions with Welsh Government about it funding road improvements to Five Mile Lane.

I look forward to those discussions continuing in order to achieve this much-needed work and give better access to the airport, the Enterprise Zone and Barry from the A48.

Youth service

FINALLY, I would like to refer to the youth service and the potential changes to the way their service is delivered, as recently reported to cabinet and highlighted in the press.

Contrary to certain rumours, this will include a 'hub' in Cowbridge, as well as the other major towns, and complemented by street-based activities in other areas.

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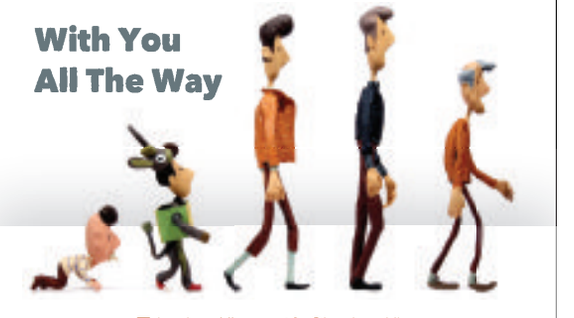

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Sunday: 10.30am - 4.30pm

Question Time taster for Vale village competition

Picture by HEATHER MARCH

THE gardening question time recently held at Dyffryn Gardens was hailed as a great success by the chairman of the Best Kept Village competition, Irena Wasilewska.

She said: "We were delighted to welcome nearly 60 people to a very pleasant afternoon in which members of the audience asked their gardening questions and exchanged views with a panel of very well informed gardening experts.

"My thanks go to the panellists, Clare Revera from Out to Learn Willow; www.outtolearnwillow.co.uk; Alex Luker, Head Gardener at Dyffryn Gardens; Ennid Hart, former Pencoed College lecturer, and Claire Jenkins from Bordervale Plants www.bordervale.co.uk who gave up their time and helped make this an interesting and enjoyable afternoon."

The 2014 Best Kept Village Competition will be getting under way in the next few weeks. There is a 'special feature' category whereby a village feature, such as a pond, village green, or area of waste land, could be transformed into a feature for all residents to enjoy.

The judges are keen to point out that the competition is not about pretty villages with quaint features. Rather it is an excellent opportunity to bring the community together while at the same time improving the appearance of an area and bringing pleasure and a sense of achievement to all those involved with its improvement.

Judging will take place between June 23 and July 11, and the winners will be announced at a special awards evening on July 17.

All Vale villages are invited to compete.

For further information, contact Carole Alexander at: ***carole.alexander1@hotmail.co.uk***

WILDLIFE AWARDS

VALE of Glamorgan Biodiversity Partnership 'Awards for Wildlife' competition is again open for entries.

Practical projects that help native wildlife, while engaging children, undertaken by schools, colleges, education centres and children's groups are eligible.

Closing date for entries is Wednesday, April 30 and the winner will receive a trophy during the Grand Parade at the Vale of Glamorgan show on Wednesday, August 13; certificate and £250 prize money, kindly donated by RWE Npower Aberthaw. There are also prizes of £100 and £50 for second and third places.

For further information and an application pack, contact Andrea Rowe at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry Docks, Barry CF63 4RT, phone 01446 704631 or email acrowe@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Do not delay in making claims!

MANY tenants are unaware that they have a right to make a claim against their landlords for not registering their bonds/deposits.

From April 6, 2007, if a tenant provided their landlord with a deposit for a property it required registration. The time scale varies depending on when the tenant entered the tenancy; however they should have been provided with a registration certificate.

If the landlord failed to register the deposit the tenant can claim up to three times the rent.

Catherine from Newbold Solicitors has had a 100 per cent success rate in bringing claims against landlords on behalf of tenants.

Catherine says: "When I first became a housing solicitor I was always in Court representing tenants who could not get their bonds returned to them from their landlords at the end of their tenancies.

"It was only the bravest tenant who went through the court process to recover the money that was due to them.

"The Courts were inundated with claims, so in 2007, the Housing Act introduced a bill whereby landlords had to register the bonds in an appropriate within 14 days of receiving it, which has now been increased to 30 days.

"Once the bond was registered if there was a dispute, the scheme would instruct their arbitrator to decide who should have the bond, and whether any deductions could be made.

"However, some landlords still try and keep the bond and this is the reason why the tenants are eligible for damages/compensation."

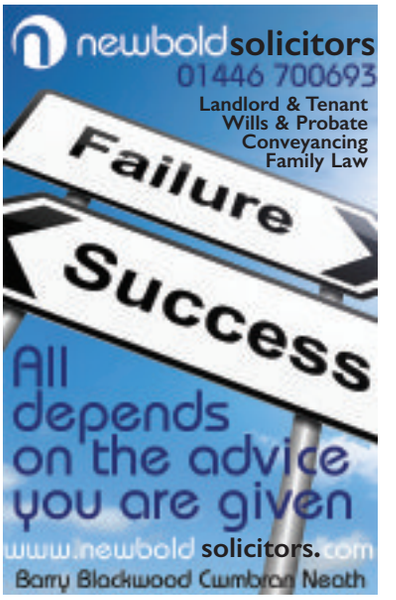
Some landlords are still unaware of the need to register the bond and they may have the property rented through an agent.

If the agent has not registered the bond, then the landlord may have a claim against the agent for his/her loss.

Further, without the registering of the bond and the serving of a prescribed notice, it can be more difficult to regain possession of the property.

If you are a tenant, Newbolds may be able to help you on a 'no win no fee' basis; and we may also be able to help landlords who have not had their bonds registered by their agent.

Please telephone our housing team on 01446 700693, who can assess your claim for free.



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COED-Y-MWSTWR
HOTEL - *Bridgend*

A Glamorgan GEM Advertising Feature

'Hidden gem' hotel takes another step forward with a £350,000 investment to give clients what they really need

THE Coed-y-Mwstwr Hotel in Coychurch, Bridgend, has been acknowledged as a high-quality four-star venue in the area for some time now, but a new £350,000 investment is aiming to take it on to the next level.

It is all part of a constant improvement programme that is designed to place the historic hotel right at the forefront of south Wales' hotels.

What's more, the investment will create new jobs in the area, and it sends a strong message that the Coed-y-Mwstwr is a hotel that is going places.

Ironically, the Coed-y-Mwstwr's secluded location, which is such an important feature of the hotel, means that local people tend to be unaware of the changes that have already taken place over the last 14 years.

Guests who have stayed there are full of praise for the hotel, and they certainly appreciate all the new facilities, and also enjoy the surrounding 17 acres of woodland and countryside.

It is even better for golfers, as they are right next door to a golf course!

However, for many local people it may be a while since they visited, – and they simply don't know what they are missing.

Now, this new £350,000 investment offers the chance to see just what has been happening at the Coed-y-Mwstwr.

So how is the money being spent? Well, the Town & Country Hotels Group has marked 14 successful years in charge by developing the Hendre Function Suite.

The group also owns The Bear Hotel and Oscars in Cowbridge, the New House Country Hotel in Cardiff, as well as its outside catering operation, Town & Country Catering.

The Hendre Function Room has been extended in response to demand, while the access and facilities have been vastly improved, in keeping with the newly-refurbished accommodation throughout the hotel.

The Managing Director of the Town & Country Hotels Group, Julian Hitchcock, originally bought the Coed y Mwstwr Hotel as a three-star country house hotel from Virgin Hotels in 1999.

The hotel had been through a number of owners in the 80s and 90s, but Mr Hitchcock could see real potential.

It has since gone on to achieve the prestigious four-star rating, as well as gaining two rosettes for the award-winning restaurant.

Julian said: "We were frequently asked by our current and potential customers for a meeting area to accommodate a large stage set, with improved disabled access – and I am pleased to say we have been able to achieve this.

"We've also ensured that the design, while modern, is in keeping with the hotel and its character – our new internal ceiling now boasts some amazing beams.

"The response from our many guests, both for business and weddings has been very positive. We've also created a number of new jobs over the years, including the most recent appointments to tie in with the expansion."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 17)

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COED-Y-MWSTWR HOTEL - *Bridgend*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

Julian added: "Investment back into the business has always been important to me and it is what has helped maintain our four stars and the standard that represents.

"The latest development will give the hotel the additional capacity it needs as we look to host larger scale events in Bridgend county.

"We're also planning to further develop our outside space to encourage more team building and corporate events."

Since Town & Country bought the hotel 14 years ago, there have been plenty of other extras added, including a gymnasium and a sauna – while there have been extensive interior refurbishments as well.

The 35 individually decorated en-suite bedrooms ensure all modern comforts and facilities are provided.

Weddings have become more and more popular, and this can only increase now that the larger function room is added to the overall offer.

Afternoon champagne teas have also been a recent addition, and a number of people have used this as a chance to take a good look at this elegant country house, built in 1888, that is now a haven for visitors and guests.

Few settings are more aptly named, for Coed-y-Mwstwr translates as 'Whispering Trees' – and the continued investment in this 'hidden gem' will build on this sense of tranquillity -– and create a venue that aims to meet the expectations of their guests from far and wide.

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Ffion (12) *and friends* wear purple in Epilepsy Week

ABOVE : Ffion's friends go purple for Epilepsy Week.

TWELVE-year-old Ffion Williams from Treoes, who suffers from epilepsy, arranged for her friends to dress in purple as part of Epilepsy Week, and invited Vale MP Alun Cairns to join them.

Ffion said she was diagnosed with temporal lobe epilepsy last autumn and that the seizures have a serious impact: "Although my intelligence level is the same, my speech sounds like a six-year-old, although I am actually 12.

"It can be quite emotional and comical at the same time. Sometimes I do a funny dance and occasionally swear! I don't remember the seizures happening, but they occur every evening. I don't remember any evening since last November.

"I want Mr Cairns to help raise the matter in Parliament and with the National Assembly, because many people are misdiagnosed. "

The MP commented: "Ffion is remarkable. I am hugely impressed with her maturity and attitude. Along with her parents, she is determined to help ensure that people are properly diagnosed. There is evidence that suggests the symptoms can be misunderstood.

"I have tabled questions in Parliament to establish what networks exist between specialist doctors and want to work with Epilepsy UK to ensure GPs receive the information they need.

"There are tens of different types of epilepsy, often with different symptoms. I want to ensure that our local doctors are part of the UK network of specialists," he vowed.

BHBi donates £1,000 to Macmillan charity

BHBi's director of strategic operations Paul Haley is pictured left, with Rebecca Parke of Macmillan, and BHBi's managing director Mark Barnes on the right.

BHBi has donated £1,000 to Macmillan Cancer Support for the second consecutive year.

Director of strategic operations, Paul Haley said: "As the UK's largest private sector provider of professional Internal Audit training, we strongly believe in social responsibility and are delighted to have made a £1,000 donation to such a worthwhile charity on behalf of all our Internal Audit students."

"This is the second successive annual donation and shows our commitment to building on our growing relationship with Macmillan. We further hope we can encourage our Alumni to also support our charitable aims which will demonstrate that we and our fellow internal audit profession colleagues care about the society in which we operate."

Rebecca Parke, Fundraising Manager for Macmillan Cancer Support said: "I want to say a huge thank you to everyone at BHBi for choosing to support Macmillan Cancer Support by raising funds with a donation from student enrolments."

The donation came as a result of a training course discussion with students during a module on corporate social responsibility. Following a class debate, BHBi staff decided that there was an opportunity for the company to make a bigger difference and show that BHBi and the Internal Audit community can make an impact on wider society.

Valeways guided walks

TUESDAY, April 1: 10am – Hoffi Cerdded, Hoffi Coffi; start at Coffee Cove Cafe, Barry Island.

Wednesday, April 2: 10.30am – Coffee Shop Strollers, start at Romilly Cafe, Cold Knap, Barry.

'VALE OF JAM' PLAY SCARLETS!

LOCAL acoustic duo The Vale of Jam-Morgan will be playing at Scarlets bar, Broad Street, Barry this Saturday (March 29) from 9pm.

With an eclectic mix of material spanning the 1960s to the present day, featuring songs from The Beatles to Pharrel, they're a live act not to be missed!

ABOVE: Prof Egan with Jane Hutt and Coun Elmore and staff and students at Cardiff and Vale College.

Vale challenge to 'realise every child's potential'

CIVIC and business leaders have been warned – *"we need to be clear about the challenge in realising the potential of every child in the Vale".*

It came at the 14th annual spring breakfast on Friday (March 21) held by Vale AM Jane Hutt at Cardiff and Vale College in Barry, when the theme was 'Education in the Vale', with guest speakers Prof David Egan and Coun Chris Elmore.

Professor Egan's message was that the task requires leadership and engagement from the early years with families, communities, governors and parents, overcoming barriers and disadvantage, through Welsh Government programmes like Flying Start and Families First.

Ms Hutt commented: "This was my 14th spring breakfast in the Hospitality Suite at Colcot Road, Barry, cooked and served by students, providing valuable work experience as part of the course at the college.

"I congratulated the students on their culinary and hospitality skills and told them that they had good job and career prospects to meet the growing tourism and hospitality sector in Wales," the AM added. (*See page 9*).

Local primary pupils' six-mile chariot pull

ABOVE; The five charioteers.

FIVE pupils from year-6 in Llancarfan Primary School raised £441.57 with a 6-mile chariot pull dressed as sports stars.

Sam, Harry, Dylan, Joe and Gruff took turns to pull the chariot through the village of Llancarfan.

It was a magnificent effort and we'd like to congratulate the boys on a job well done!

The boys would like to thank all those who donated. ***If others would like to contribute, please use just giving page http://www.justgiving.com/jo-ford4.*** **JF**

Shy U3A shine!

DESPITE the considerable opposition of teams from Maesteg (two) Bridgend (two) Cardiff (two) and Porthcawl (one), all of whom were generous and gracious losers, Cowbridge U3A emerged as what must be assumed to be Glamorgan, if not Wales', U3A quiz champions.

As is our unassuming nature, we will not name ourselves as Fran, Hywel, Steve, Dafydd and Tim. **TB**

'Repair park wall' – CALL

RESIDENTS living in the Bassett area of Barry are calling for the Vale of Glamorgan Council to take action on a damaged park wall.

The call was made at the recent Court PACT meeting, where they asked for action to repair the damaged wall between Bassett Park and the Tadcross Pub.

Local councillor Richard Bertin says he has now taken the matter up with the authority. He says he agrees with local residents as there is both a safety and security issue at the park.

Cardiff and Vale College
Coleg Caerdydd a'r Fro

Start College in 2014!

Last chance to come to an open evening

Tuesday 8th April, 2014
4.30pm–7.30pm at Colcot Road, Barry

OR

Wednesday 9th April, 2014
4.30pm–7.30pm at Cardiff sites

For full details of subjects and locations and to register your place visit:
www.cavc.ac.uk/startcollegein2014 **info@cavc.ac.uk** **030 30 30 10 10**

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Dechreuwch yn y Coleg yn 2014!

Cyfle olaf i ddod i noson agored

Nos Fawrth 8 Ebrill, 2014
4.30pm–7.30pm, Heol Colcot, y Barri

NEU

Nos Fercher 9 Ebrill, 2014
4.30pm–7.30pm, safleoedd Caerdydd

Am fanylion llawn y pynciau a'r lleoliadau ac i gofrestru eich lle, ewch i:
www.cavc.ac.uk/dechraucolegyn2014 **info@cavc.ac.uk** **030 30 30 10 10**

Breuddwydio. Byw. Gwireddu gyda Choleg Caerdydd a'r Fro.

'Progress made on automated gates dangers' – BRIDGEND MP

FOUR years after the tragic death of a young child in an automated gate incident, Madeleine Moon MP has had a meeting with Mike Penning, minister responsible for the Health and Safety Executive, and the founder of Gate Safe, Richard Jackson (pictured above).

The accident in Bridgend in 2010 resulted in the death of Karolina Golabek, aged five, and the MP explained: "The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the achievements of the Gate Safe charity to date. The Rt Hon Mike Penning wholly supported the need to continue to enhance awareness of the importance of adopting the correct safety protocol for automated gates.

Mrs Moon, who is patron of Gate Safe, went on: "The meeting with the Minister was very positive and we appear to have made considerable progress. Mike Penning had been shocked to learn of the death of two children as a result of problems with electric gates and was eager to ensure that a close working relationship between the HSE and Gate Safe is achieved to raise safety standards.

"I was especially pleased that he instructed officials to ensure the HSE guidance for gate installation was updated quickly on their website."

Richard Jackson, founder of Gate Safe added: "Since October 2010, when Gate Safe handed in a petition to 10 Downing Street to highlight the urgent need to address safety issues relating to automated gates, our campaign has made considerable progress.

"However, we would like to work with the Health and Safety Executive to further improve the understanding of what constitutes a safe automated gate, and what steps must be taken to establish – and maintain – a safe electric gate."

PONTYCLUN RALLIES TO MACMILLAN!

IN their first year the Pontyclun & District Macmillan fundraising support group raised over £6,000 and to celebrate this first anniversary, they are planning to stage a Variety Night.

It will be held at Llanharry Workingmen's Club, on April 4, at 7.30pm, and with the support of the club, entertainment includes Daniel 'Ollie Murs' Cadogan; Stephen Preston composer, arranger and songwriter; Julie 'poems & pints' Croad; ladies choir O2Five; comedian Steve Saint; Minniesingers Male Chorus and the talented pupils of Y Pant School with a musical medley.

Tickets £5 include food, available from The Flower Pot, The Community Shop or Rybec Estate Agents all in Pontyclun, also from The Llanharry Workingmens Club, Llanharry.

Alternatively, Edwina Clark (07710198617), Pat Clash (07974183987), Julie Croad (07933944165), Jeanie Heavisides (01443 230249) or Ann Bennett (01443 225187).

Rebecca Parke, Macmillan fundraising manager, said: "The Pontyclun & District group have gone from strength to strength since forming in early 2013.

They have not only raised over £6,000 to support local people affected by cancer, but are really bringing the community together with their fundraising.

"They've had brilliant support from all over the area and continue to achieve great things in the community.

"Macmillan can only fund services thanks to the generosity of the public."

To find out more how you can help, call 0300 1000 200 or visit www.macmillan.org.uk/fundraising.

Ploughing furrows at Ogmore by Sea

THE Glamorgan Ploughing and Hedging Society will be running a ploughing coaching course on Saturday, March 29, at Ogmore-by Sea (by permission of Mr Graham David) near the old Sealawns hotel/pub.

There will be car parking space available in the Sealawns car park. Ploughing coaches and judges will be on site from 10.30am to give advice.

Further information from the chairman, Andrew Studley, on 07980 921990.

Rosie heads for book talk

BEST-selling author and adventurer Rosie Thomas will be in Cowbridge on April 4, as guest of the Cowbridge Book Festival, where she will talk about her recently published novel, *The Illusionists*, in the United Free Church at 7.30pm.

Originally from north Wales, Rosie won a scholarship and became a boarder at Howell's School and went on to read English at St Hilda's College, Oxford.

After a few years working for women's magazines, her first novel was published in 1982.

She is now the author of over 20 novels, most recently the award-winning **Iris and Ruby** and **The Kashmir Shawl** (published in 2012 to critical acclaim).

All proceeds from 2014 Festival events will be donated to The Noah's Ark Appeal Children's Hospital of Wales, and Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research.

Contact *www.cowbridgebookfestival.co.uk.*

Tickets are available from David Barnes (dry cleaners) 35 High Street, Cowbridge; Nicklebys, Pound Field, Llantwit Majoror; online from TicketlineUK or via the Festival Website; or phone Stella Cheeseman 01446 774827. **SRC**

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D819.

● **£2,000:** 650292.

● **The rollover, which now stands at £8,000 was not won this week.**

● **£10:** 534343, 370695, 281447, 364636, 783584, 724023, 703946, 833193, 683370, 178684, 602587, 107345, 545813, 792634, 930450, 344151, 102419, 000749, 000122, 000865.

● **£5:** 408898, 564958, 552826, 351543, 349979, 153775, 309677, 757744, 815070, 621591, 828191, 373512, 642179, 670093, 503016, 497160, 914899, 877994, 244983, 341550, 542524, 526152, 177469, 799313, 249431, 895574, 384148, 880875, 104745, 740589, 292888, 764129, 452181, 311607, 662876, 762837, 102185, 642662, 642295, 385385, 598478, 391611, 320237, 839499, 492591, 854680, 251226, 304453, 817283, 932443, 131365, 777833, 758752, 622636, 261140, 270835, 337143, 784509, 130704, 145853.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

Out and About with The GEM

Antique fair

TREASURE Trove Fairs are holding an antique and collectors' fair at Cowbridge Leisure Centre on March 30, with up to 40 stands of quality items; it falls on Mothers' Day.

Some dealers will purchase items from customers, and are always ready to give advice. Free parking.

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Bute Park talk

RHOOSE and District History Society will present a talk by Rosie James on 'Bute Park Cardiff's hidden history', on Friday March 28 at 7.30pm in the rear hall of Rhoose Community Centre, Stewart Road.

Tickets at the door: £1 per adult' 50p per child (under 16 yrs).

Shakespeare exhibition

TO celebrate the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, Wales Millennium Centre will be the first venue to display a new touring exhibition from the Victoria and Albert Museum – 'Shooting Shakespeare; 150 Years of Stage Photography'.

On display from March 29, the unique exhibition will include production photographs from Shakespeare's Globe's Globe to Globe festival alongside images from the V&A's Theatre and Performance Collections.

Game and Country Fair

THE South Wales Game and Country Fair takes place on Saturday and Sunday, April 5 and 6.

Living Heritage are proud to add the venue of Fonmon Castle to their series of shows.

It offers family entertainment in three main arenas, with country sports and pursuits performed by some of the countryside's top names and associations.

The event include and appearance in the Andy Singleton Arena of the Scurry Driving Championship team, an explosive display of scurry driving at its best; and Horseboarding, with a national championship qualifying heat.

Slalom, falconry, gundog and sheepdog displays, fishing, ferret racing, lurchers and terriers are other varied demonstrations.

Flying displays include Bateleur, Russian Step and African Fish Eagles.

Childrens' entertainment includes puppet shows, waterballs, bouncy castles, how to 'handle a gundog', how to 'fish', or 'fly a hawk, or owl' in the falconry village.

In addition, there are trade exhibitors, craft village and cookery demonstrations in the Food Show.

Saturday and Sunday, April 5 and 6; open 10am-6pm daily at Fonmon Castle, Fonmon, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 3ZN; adults £12, over-65s £11; children £4.

Full show details available on www.livingheritagecountryshows.com; telephone 01283 820548.

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www.livingheritagecountryshows.com Tel: 01283 820 548

WHAT'S ON *in brief*

Art society

ON Thursday, April 3, Cowbridge Art Society holds its annual Keith James Trophy when members' paintings will be assessed by local artist Lesley Dearn (see www.lesleydearn.co.uk).

The society meets on Thursday evenings at the Old Hall, Cowbridge (7 – 9pm) and visitors and new members are welcome. For details of the society's activities, see www.cowbridgeartsociety.com.

History lecture

COWBRIDGE History Society meets on Friday, April 4 at 7.30pm in the Lesser Hall, Cowbridge, when the Maud Gunter Memorial lecture – Mary Andrews, Postmistress, Llantwit Major in the 1930s – will be given by Chris Young.

This is a change to the published programme. Members should note that the society's AGM will be held on Friday, May 2 at 6.30pm.

Charity boot sale

There is a boot sale at The Rest in Porthcawl every Sunday (weather permitting) starting Sunday April 6 at 7am till 1pm; £6 per car, £12 per van.

Car park for buyers; donation 50p; take-away tea/coffee and snacks available. All proceeds to Healing the Wounds charity.

Tax help for elderly

TAXHELP for Older People (TOP) Surgery will be at Roz Couzens' Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial House, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major, CF61 1RBH on April 7 from 10am until midday.

No appointment is necessary. People can call in for free advice. To access the TOP's helpline, telephone 0845 6013321, or 01308 488066. Home visits can also be arranged via this helpline for people unable to attend the surgery.

Shadows club

ON April 8, Penarth Conservative Club, Stanwell Road (029 2030 9979) will stage the South Wales Shadows Club's meeting. Play (use PA) or just listen; 8pm; usually £3; all are welcome.

Crime prevention

BRIDGEND Police will be holding a crime reduction event on Wednesday, April 9 at Castle Bingo, Bridgend, opened by the Mayor, Coun Clive James at 9.30am.

The local policing team and a number of agencies will give advice on how to keep safe in your home.

Lions' book and DVD sale

THE Llantwit Major and Cowbridge Lions Club will be holding a book sale on the Precinct, Llantwit Major on April 12 from 10am – 4pm.

The club welcomes donations of new books to add to their stock and DVDs which must be in good condition.

Contact the Lions at www.lmandclions.org.uk or eamil info@lamdnclions.org.uk (telephone 0845 833 6763).

Walk the Vale for charity

THE Ed Evans Foundation, which raises money for The Brain Tumour Charity in Wales will Walk the Vale on Easter Monday (April 21).

There will be a long walk and short walk, starting from The Plough and Harrow, Monknash CF71 7QQ. Registration for both walks from 9am; £5 entry fee.

Form and information available from: www.edevansfoundation.co.uk; Sue Evans Tel: 01656 890217.

Charity gala

A MICHAEL (Clive) Down Gala Charity Evening (Er budd Ambiwlans Awyr Cymru – In aid of Wales Air Ambulance) will be held with Kenfig Hill & District Male Voice Choir and special guests Ogmore Valley Silver Band, Stephen Ulberini (tenor) and Stefanie Harvey-Powell (soprano) at Bethlehem Life Centre, Cefn Cribwr, Bridgend on Saturday, April 12 at 7pm.

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19/4/2014	Saturday	Windsor & Legoland (Coach Only)	£14.00	£13.00
22/4/2014	Tuesday	Oakwood Park or Folly Farm (Coach Only)	£9.50	£9.00
26/4/2014	Saturday	West Midlands Safari (Coach Only)	£14.50	£13.50
06/5/2014	Tuesday	Abergavenny Market	£9.95	£9.50
10/5/2014	Saturday	Malvern Spring Gardening Show (Coach Only)	£11.50	£10.50
17/5/2014	Saturday	London Flyer, Sights or London Show (Coach Only)	£15.50	£15.00
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26/5/2014	Monday	Oakwood Park or Folly Farm (Coach Only)	£9.50	£9.00
07/6/2014	Saturday	Stratford Upon Avon	£12.95	£11.95
13/6/2014	Friday	Cotswolds, 4 Day Short Break Weekend	£171.50	£171.50
14/6/2014	Saturday	Oxford City Centre	£14.00	£13.50
21/6/2014	Saturday	Ross on Wye 'Labels' & Gloucester Quays	£11.50	£10.50
28/6/2014	Saturday	Cotswolds Villages – Day Trip	£11.95	£10.95
05/7/2014	Saturday	Street Village & Weston Super Mare	£12.50	£11.50
12/7/2014	Saturday	Worcester	£13.75	£13.00
18/7/2014	Friday	Cheshire, 4 Day Short Break Weekend	£185.00	£185.00
19/7/2014	Saturday	Haverfordwest & St Davids City	£14.00	£13.50
23/7/2014	Wednesday	Royal Welsh Show, Coach Only	£12.00	£11.50
25/7/2014	Friday	Lincoln, 4 Day Short Break Weekend	£159.50	£159.50
11/8/2014	Monday	Norwich & Sandringham, 5 Day Holiday, 4*	£264.00	£264.00
01/9/2014	Monday	Cork Ireland, 5 Day Holiday, 4* Hotel	£355.00	£355.00
3/10/2014	Friday	Cotswolds, 4 Day Short Break Weekend	£171.50	£171.50

Short Break Holidays Summer 2014
Friday 13th June & 17th October 2014. Cotswolds, 4 days Friday to Monday. Adults £171.50.
Friday 18th July 2014. Cheshire, 4 days Friday to Monday. Adults £185.
Friday 27th July 2014. Lincoln, 4 days Friday to Monday. Adults £159.50.
Monday 11th August 2014. Norwich 5 days Monday to Friday. Adults £264.
Monday 1st September 2014. Cork, Ireland, 5 days Monday to Friday. Adults £355.
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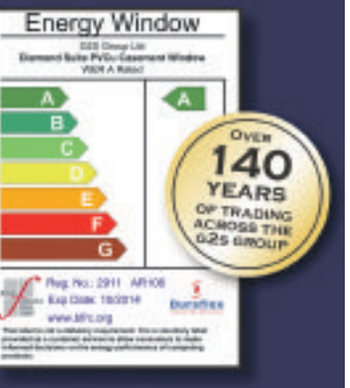

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RHOOSE BOWLING CLUB

'Bowls - a sport for all ages'

Discover a new sport at the Rhoose Bowling Club's 'open day' on April 5!

RHOOSE Bowling Club is holding an 'open day' on Saturday, April 5, with an invitation to people of all ages to find out about the sport and learn from qualified coaches.

Brian Shears, who has been the chairman for two years, emphasised that the event was an ideal opportunity for local people to find out more about the club situated on Celtic Way.

"Rhoose Bowling Club is a go-ahead club eager to attract members from all age groups.

"We already have links to the local primary school, who are encouraged to enjoy bowling at the club, and strong links to the community also.

"We also provide training facilities for the Welsh national team, who are currently preparing for the Commonwealth Games being held in Glasgow later this year."

The day is free – all people have to do is bring along suitable footwear.

"We hope to welcome all ages, and are particularly keen to see ladies and teenagers coming along.

"The national team and county team tend to be people in their 30s and we want to encourage a new generation."

The club is already putting in time with youngsters at Rhoose Primary School.

Brian explained: "They come for six PE lessons during the summer. When they come for the final session, we hold a competition with parents and present prizes.

"Unlike other areas, such as Barry and Llantwit Major, we don't have a secondary school close by – that's why we're keen to encourage local teenagers to come along to the open day.

"Last year, we welcomed the Girl Guides and the Scouts and if local youth groups would like to come along, they are very welcome.

"We supply all the equipment and free coaching. All people have to do is bring along a pair of flat shoes."

Brian and the club have even got advice from the very top in how to promote the club.

"John Price, the world champion, has been giving us some ideas. He is the promotions man for the World Bowls Federation."

So what can people expect on Saturday, April 5?

"There will be a meet and greet, and time for a coffee and chat.

"All the equipment will be ready and laid out – we have five coaches at the club – and it will be a case of going out and enjoying playing."

So make a date at this friendly, sociable local bowling club at 2pm on April 5!

ABOVE:
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Welsh stars get off their bikes to judge some cakes and scones!

... ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE FOR SPORT RELIEF

WORLD champion cyclist Becky James and London 2012 Paralympic gold medallist Aled Davies, put the brakes on their gruelling training regimes and stepped into the kitchen to judge SWALEC's Sport Relief baking competition.

The Welsh stars joined hundreds of SWALEC employees at their Cardiff offices to help raise money for Sport Relief. Becky and Aled had the enviable task of judging the quality of cakes, scones and other sweet treats made by staff to raise money for the charity.

SWALEC employees also had the chance to be champs for the day, paying a donation to Sport Relief to wear Aled's prized Paralympic gold medal from London 2012.

Aled said: "I'm training hard for Glasgow 2014, but I couldn't resist having one day off to play Paul Hollywood to Becky's Mary Berry for the day. SWALEC is a big supporter of both of us and so it's been great to come along here today to help support staff raising money for a fantastic cause."

Wendy Barbour, SWALEC's Director of Sponsorship and Commonwealth Games, said the company and staff were proud to be an official partner of Sport Relief and playing a part in raising millions for charity.

She said: "There's been a tremendous amount of fundraising activity across all SSE offices, from 24-hour rowing competitions to sporting challenges. The SSE Sport Relief baking competition is slightly less energetic but no less competitive, and it's fantastic to have Aled and Becky here to judge the winner.

The money raised by Sport Relief goes to help vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the UK and across the world, giving them a helping hand to turn their lives around.

Looking back on a full life with no regrets

I WAS born in London on April 5, 1914, just before the First World War started.

My first childhood memory was when aged three and a half years, I saw an airship in the sky, searchlights flashing away, and the sound of heavy gunfire taking place (it was wartime).

Also at the same age my mother paid a halfpenny a week for me to attend school.

From the beginning, the teacher stood in front with a picture and we had to say – "C-A-T, cat; D-O-G, dog; S-U-N, sun," etc.

By the age of five years I could read a child's comic.

Still in London during the Second World War I was in the Fire Service throughout the Blitz, being bombed day and night.

Two things have stayed in my memory: the afternoon when the London docks were bombed. The whole of the sky was lit up and it was days before it was put out.

The other was a telegram asking me to go to East Driffield because my brother (an airgunner on the German raids) was involved in a fatal accident.

I was taken to the mortuary and I could not believe my eyes. From the floor to the ceiling, it was full of shelves, each one holding an airman on it, a tragic loss of all those young lives.

I have led a very full life being involved in many things and I have no regrets.

Mrs 'Trixie' Heveron, Rhoose.

Readers' Letters

Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, Don John, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7EL or email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

IMPORTANT: We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. ***Letters and e-mails MUST include full address and a contact telephone number.*** An email address alone is not sufficient! We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested.

'Fair funding the way forward'

LAST week, the Vale Conservative group tabled a motion in full council opposing a merger with Cardiff, as recommended by a recent Welsh Government-commissioned report.

We didn't do this to protect our own jobs, nor was it done because we oppose attempts to streamline local government in Wales. We did it because we firmly believe that a return to the bad old days of 'South Glamorgan' would be a disaster for the Vale.

The cost of politics needs to be reduced and we have to find ways, as a council to save money – and to ensure that we spend every penny of your money wisely. But submerging the Vale into a Greater Cardiff region will put our towns and villages at a disadvantage, heightening competition for limited funding, and lead to the decimation of our green areas as we take on a greater share of housing to meet Cardiff's much greater need.

I was angry that residents were hit by the council with a huge council tax rise, but the way to prevent that from happening again is to campaign for fair funding from the Welsh Labour Government – not to merge our council with our much larger neighbours.

Coun John Thomas,
Leader, Vale of Glamorgan Conservative Group.

'WASTE OF OUR TAXES'

IT has now been revealed that this Labour-led Welsh Government are wasting £180,000 of our hard earned taxes on renting a hospitality box at the Millennium Stadium.

Just when is the Assembly First Minister going to be brought to task about the prolific spending of our money?

He refused to use money diverted from the UK Government to the Welsh Government to alleviate the rise in council tax; – has spent over £60 million on Cardiff Airport; over £400,000 on a shuttle bus service from Cardiff to the airport which is hardly being used; over £10,000 on televisions for his Assembly. Was this in his party manifesto before the election?

He believes in democracy, yet refused to give the Welsh people a referendum on council tax rises.

Can you just imagine this lot getting tax raising and borrowing powers?

D J Radford,
Barry.

Merger referendum

I WAS pleased to read that Alun Cairns, in his column last week, picked up my suggestion that a referendum should be held before any merger of the Vale with Cardiff could take place. What views do our Assembly Members have on this exercise of democracy?

Gordon Kemp (former Conservative Leader of the Vale Council,
Walterston.

HATS GALORE – and a cheque for flood victims

JAN LEWIS entertained the Vale NFU Ladies' meeting in Penllyn Village Hall this month by bringing hand crafted hats, fascinations and jewellery; fun was had by all and everyone had a good try on!

The jewellery matching the hats seemed to be a great success. It was a splendid evening and Helena Davies gave the vote of thanks.

Chairperson Ann Rees said that £400 had been sent from the Vale NFU Ladies in support of the Somerset farmers' flood appeal. This was sent via David Harris of Bridgend NFU, in conjunction with the proceeds raised at the entertainment at Barry Memorial Hall.

The next meeting will be held on April 22 at 7.30pm; new members are welcome. **JS**

Mayor's coffee

THE Vale of Glamorgan Mayor is hosting a charity coffee morning in aid of Valeplus on April 1, from 10.30am to 12 noon in the Civic Office. All are welcome.

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Starred Up – a taut and brutal piece of work...

OF all the great British television institutions to provide cinema with a new wave of bright young talent, E4's *Skins* is perhaps the most unlikely; but one look at its graduating class might make you change your mind.

Nicholas Hoult has found himself featuring in the *X-Men* franchise, Dev Patel shone in S*lumdog Millionaire* and is now in Aaron Sorkin's *The Newsroom*, Kaya Scodelario is tipped for big things, and Hannah Murray is in TV's *Game Of Thrones*.

The next alumni aiming to break out is Jack O'Connell, who stars in gritty British drama *Starred Up*; he plays Eric, a troubled and violent teenager who is transferred from a youth offender institute (where he has been classed as 'starred up', i.e a violent youth) to a prison where his father Neville (Ben Mendelsohn) is also incarcerated.

With a volunteer, Oliver (Rupert Friend), attempting to rationalise his behaviour and work out why he leans so much towards violence, will Eric's ways change?...

While there have been many films that have attempted to show the brutal reality of life in prison, no film since Alan Clarke's *Scum* has truly captured the constricting nature of life behind bars, the tension and fear of every moment vividly brought to life.

Time will tell whether *Starred Up* can manage to usurp the 'daddy' of the genre, but on first impressions it certainly puts up a good fight, the film an incredibly taut and brutal piece of work that leaves a lasting impression on you.

Having previously helmed the low-key Scottish drama *Hallam Foe*, David Mackenzie seems an unlikely director for a film that deals in a world of violence and anger, yet his direction is pitch-perfect here.

With hand-held cameras and close-ups granting us an intimate look into prison life, Mackenzie is an unflinching observer, the danger of the world always on the periphery, even in the most sedate of moments.

Mackenzie constantly makes the audience aware of how removed these prisoners are from the real world, either through their behaviour or the constant soundtrack of doors being locked shut; it makes for an immersive experience, one that can feel claustrophobic at times, but that grants the film a mood and atmosphere that enriches the viewing experience.

In the lead role Jack O'Connell is an absolute revelation as Eric; his is a performance of anger and physicality, yet while the actor nails this with precision, it's the more human moments that sing out, the young boy beneath the bluster only ever occasionally coming to the surface.

That isn't to say that the edges are ever really softened – there are no moments of emotional vulnerability, the mask of bravado always in place, but it is O'Connell's ability to shine a light, no matter how small, on these moments that make this a performance to watch.

Ben Mendelsohn makes a perfect foil as his father, the Australian actor giving his best Cockney accent and delivering a low-key, but hugely intense performance, the father/son dynamic the driving force behind the film, and Mendelsohn, who is building up a solid body of work, more than delivers the goods.

by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter – @GEMScreenTalk

Rupert Friend is equally as strong, the slow peeling away of his character's psyche being brought dramatically to life by the actor, whose slight personality gives way to a man who has more in common with the prisoners he volunteers with than he lets on.

Jonathan Asser offers a script that is punchy and engaging, his characters vivid and the situations all too real.

The film can't quite escape the stereotypes you find in this genre – the new boy on the block, the wizened heads helping him, the kingpin who runs the prison, guards who are prepared to turn a blind eye when necessary – but Asser gives them their own sense of purpose and makes the characters feel richer and less predictable, and if the pay-off doesn't quite match the build up, the quality of what has gone before sweetens the pill somewhat; what is undeniable is that by *Starred Up's* credits you'll feel both exhausted and exhilarated by a bold, brutal work.

VERDICT: A stark and bleak film, *Starred Up* drips with superb performances, strong direction and a tight script. Jack O'Connell's lead turn marks him as a talent to watch, but as well as this star-making performance, this is one film that will linger with you after watching. *Highly recommended*.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Shifty* (2008), *Scum* (1979).

Nell's Point benefits from coffee morning

Pictured are the Mayor's consort, Mrs Jayne Norman; the Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan, Coun Margaret Wilkinson, and Alan Morgan from Coastwatch.

THE Vale of Glamorgan Mayor has hosted a coffee morning in aid of the National Coastwatch Institution at Nell's Point, which raised £540.

Nell's Point Station is manned by a team of trained volunteers, who keep watch over the Bristol Channel for the benefit of seafarers and coastal users, and is funded solely by donations and money raised from events such as the coffee morning.

The station was the first one to be established on the Welsh coast, and was built with funding from the National Assembly.

WHAT'S ON / in brief

Spring concert

CERDDORFA Dinas Powys Orchestra's spring concert takes place on Sunday, March 30 (7.30pm) in the Parish Hall, Britway Road, Dinas Powys CF64 4AF.

The programme will include Beethoven Overture 'Coriolan'; Beethoven Piano Concerto No 3 (soloist Tomas Klement from the Czech Republic), and Schubert Symphony No 3. Tickets available at the door or from Dinas Powys Post Office, 3 Station Road, Dinas Powys and Penarth Book Shop, Windsor Road, Penarth. Cost: £6 (£3 age 12 and under). Tel: 029 20706288; www.cdpo.org.uk.

Valeways walks

THIS Saturday (March 29) at 2pm, 'Lan a Lawr – i'r Downs' starting at Cowbridge Town Hall, maes parcio/car park.

On Sunday, March 30, 'Start of Spring', at St Peter's Church, Mill Road, Dinas Powys.

Weatherman Derek walks through Wales

VALE-based weatherman Derek Brockway, star of the popular Weatherman Walking TV series, is releasing a new book called *Great Welsh Walks* this week.

The weatherman and co-author Martin Aaron present 18 of their favourite walks from all over Wales, from the steep hills and mountains of Snowdonia to the coastal paths of Pembrokeshire and Anglesey; from busy Cardiff Bay to zig-zagging along the Offa's Dyke Path.

Each walk comes with an introduction by Derek, an OS-based map, grid references, detailed directions and pictures of significant landmarks.

"Being a BBC weatherman is my dream job," reveals Derek.

"Although work has taken me around the UK and abroad, Wales will always be home and, in my opinion, there's no better place to live.

"We're so lucky to have so much variety packed into one small country – Wales is made for walking, and whatever the weather, there's always something new to be discovered.

"Although the 18 walks in this book only scratches the surface, it gives a good taste of what our country has to offer."

Derek Brockway is signing copies in The Delicatessen, Pontyclun this Saturday, March 29 between 10.30am and 12pm; and Pyle Garden Centre, 2pm to 3.30pm.

Prize draw winner read about it in The GEM!

PICTURED (left to right): Paula Morris (Cardiff Airport), Jodie Wellington, Helen Tustin (Regal Travel), Caroline Page (Red Sea Holidays) and Jeanette Price (winner).

THE Cardiff Airport Holiday Market, with Regal Travel, made dreams come true for one Llantwit Major resident, who won an all-inclusive five star trip to Egypt, after reading about the event in The GEM.

Last month's Holiday Market saw more than 800 people visit Cardiff Airport to find out about all the destinations that can be reached from there, and take advantage of the chance to enter the free prize draw to win a trip to Siva Sharm Resort and Spa with Red Sea Holidays.

Jeanette Price was thrilled when she received the call from Regal Travel to say she was the winner. She said: "I was so pleased and surprised to win the competition. I've been to Sharm El Sheikh once before and it was very beautiful so I can't wait to go back. I'm taking my husband with me – I don't think he'd be very happy if I didn't!

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Holiday Market, which I'd read about in The GEM. It was fantastic to be able to speak to representatives from each of the tour operators in person and we took plenty of brochures away with us.

"I go on holiday once or twice a year and always fly from Cardiff because it's so convenient."

Helen Tustin, general manager at Regal Travel, said: "After two successful years of Holiday Markets in Bridgend, we thought it was time to share our expertise with a wider audience, this time with the support of Cardiff Airport, a wide variety operators and airlines.

"It was great to get the prize from Red Sea Holidays which added to the excitement on the day and we hope Mrs Price has a wonderful holiday with her husband."

The Chief Executive of Cardiff Airport, Jon Horne, said: "February proved to be the perfect time to hold our first Holiday Market; it was a fantastic opportunity to show travellers just how many wonderful places they can go from Cardiff.

"We were very pleased to work with Regal Travel and provide the south Wales community with plenty of inspiration for their next getaway.

"It was great to hear Mrs Price is a regular traveller through Cardiff because she, like so many fellow Welsh people, finds it so convenient to fly from her local airport. We're delighted she'll be flying from Cardiff for her prize with Red Sea Holidays and look forward to welcoming her and her husband in November."

TOOLBOX SURPRISE FOR COLLEGE APPRENTICES!

ABOVE: The apprentices were delighted to receive a free set of tools from their day release trainer.

OVER 130 apprentice electricians with leading national training provider JTL were surprised last week to be presented with a gift during their weekly day release attendance at Cardiff and Vale College.

They each received a free set of tools valued at more than £150, selected by the company to help young electricians, through a partnership with Monument Tools.

They were handed out by JTL's Martin Laye, and training officers Phil Rees and Simeon Thomas, helped by the head of department at Cardiff and Vale College, Gary Collins and tutor Jon Bowen.

The apprentices work with their employer for four days a week and spend a day a week at Cardiff and Vale College to build on their practical knowledge and to be taught theory.

MP welcomes welfare cap

VALE Conservative MP, Alun Cairns, this week welcomed news that 43 households in the Vale have had their benefits capped, as part of a UK Government clampdown on excessive benefits.

He said: "Obviously, capping people's benefits is always going to be an emotive subject, but it doesn't make sense when people can claim more on benefits than the average working family.

"It is not fair to claimants or to the taxpayer to be trapped on benefits. Reform was needed and the benefit cap is a key plank of the changes that were needed.

"Capping welfare is part of the Conservatives' long-term economic plan to build an economy that delivers for people who work hard and play by the rules.

"The benefit cap is ending the something for nothing culture, which means a stronger community where everyone contributes," he added.

Why mum Lisa is running marathon for the CF charity

LISA CLOSE from Broadlands, Bridgend, is running the London Marathon on Sunday, April 13, to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis research.

Lisa Close with Neil Thomas of Thomas Kitchens & Bathrooms, Bridgend, her main sponsors for the run.

She explained: "My running days started when I was six years old, dressed in a market-brought shell suit and pump up trainers.

"Just to prove to my dad I could, I ran my first fun run at a local village. I followed my mum and older sister around the course, and then blew them out on the home stretch – which is hiw I've run ever since.

"I've always run on and off over the years. I've never run any great distances and I've never run for any charities. When I did the Cardiff Half Marathon last year, I was inspired by all those running for a cause, so I started questioning why I wasn't.

"I've always wanted to run the London Marathon and to find a charity was easy – Cystic Fibrosis (CF).

"When I was expecting my first baby, at the 20-week scan they thought he might have CF, a genetic condition in which the lungs and digestive system become clogged with thick mucus.

"There is no cure, and those with CF have a lower than average life expectancy. We were devastated and would not be able to find out if he had the condition until he was six weeks old.

"We had so much support through that time. We were assigned a counsellor and I had question after question. The charity was fantastic and had so much patience.

"Ethan was born and six weeks later he was tested and it was confirmed he did not have CF, although, like his dad Matthew, he does carry the gene. We were lucky that in order for the gene to mutate, I also needed to be a carrier – they hadn't been able to find that gene in me.

"Running 26 miles will physically be the hardest thing I have ever done, but knowing that I am giving back and helping those who weren't as lucky as Ethan will keep me putting one foot in front of the other.

"All charities are worthwhile. Some have more meaning to you than others. Please support me on my journey; we never know when we may need the help of others."

Lisa is holding a charity night to help raise money for Cystic Fibrosis at Tondu Cricket Club on Friday, April 4. Tickets are still available, contact Matt on 07701 080013. Alternatively, if you would like to make a donation, contact www.virginmoneygiving.com/LisaClose1.

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The Aberthin tractor boys plough the fields and demonstrate how to keep a straight line

PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

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THERE'S a renewed ineterest in traditional rural pursuits such as ploughing and hedging, with regular competitions being held.

Last weekend, the Tractor Boys of Aberthin held a training day in Llanharan, so that anyone thinking of entering a competition could refine their technique!

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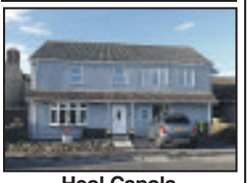

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SSTC
BRAMBLE AVENUE, BARRY
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SSTC
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SSTC
WYE CLOSE, BARRY
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SSTC
PONTYPRIDD ROAD, BARRY
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SSTC
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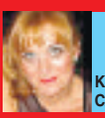
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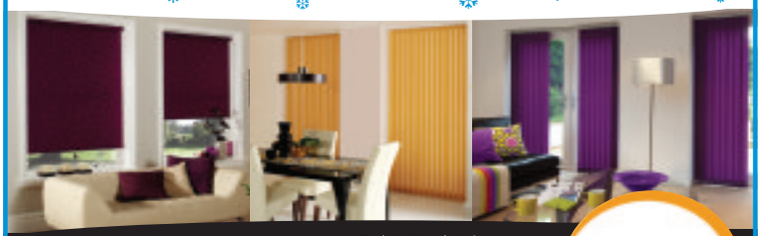

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Family Notices

HYETT

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On 21st March 2014, aged 65 years, passed away peacefully at home within the love and care of her family. Reunited with her beloved husband Peter, much loved mum of Sally and Helen and a devoted grandma. Sadly missed by all her family and friends.

Service Bournemouth Crematorium on Thursday, 27th March at 2.00pm. Family flowers only please, if desired donations made payable to "Shelter" may be sent c/o George Scott Funeral Services, 15 Somerset Road, Boscombe, BH7 6JH. Tel. 01202 395827

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Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

Development that may affect a Conservation Area/ Datblygu a allai effeithio ar Ardal Gadwraeth

Application No:Rhif y cais: 2014/00245/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig: Installation of 8 No. outdoor condenser units to the rear elevation first floor
Location:/Lleoliad: Specsavers Opticians, 10, Windsor Road, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth Penarth

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2014/00246/ADV
Proposal:/Cynnig: Proposed alterations to shopfront signage
Location:/Lleoliad: Specsavers Opticians, 10, Windsor Road, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth Penarth

Application(s) of General Interest/ Ceisiadau o Ddiddordeb Cyffredinol

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2014/00242/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig: Development of 62 residential dwellings, open space, sustainable urban drainage, vehicular and pedestrian accesses, landscaping and related infrastructure and engineering works
Location:/Lleoliad: Land to the rear of St David's Primary School, Colwinston

May affect a Public Right of Way/ Gall effeithio ar Hawl Tramwy Cyhoeddus

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2014/00247/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig: Retrospective application for the excavation of 3 ponds/basins
Location:/Lleoliad: The Barley Field, The Lawns, Cwrt yr Ala Road, Cardiff

Departure from Development Plan / Gwyro o'r Cynllun Datblygu

Application No:/Rhif y cais: 2014/00242/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig: Development of 62 residential dwellings, open space, sustainable urban drainage, vehicular and pedestrian accesses, landscaping and related infrastructure and engineering works
Location:/Lleoliad: Land to the rear of St David's Primary School, Colwinston

Application(s) with Environmental Statement/ Cais (au) gyda Datganiad Amgylcheddol

NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 8
Proposed development at Land south of Junction 34, M4, Hensol.

I give notice that Renishaw PLC is applying to The Vale of Glamorgan Council for Planning Permission to Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except for access, for development comprising class B1, B2 and B8 uses; a hotel/residential training centre (class C1/C2); and ancillary uses within class A1, A2, A3; associated engineering and ground modelling works and infrastructure, car parking, drainage and access for all uses; provision of infrastructure (including energy centre(s)); landscaping and all ancillary enabling works.

The proposal has been submitted with an environmental statement which can be inspected at the address given below. Members of the public may obtain copies of the environmental statement at a charge of £20.00 for the Non-Technical Summary, £100.00 for Volume 1 : ES main Text and figures, £150.00 for Volume 2 and 3 : ES Appendices or £20.00 for full copy (Volumes 1 and 2 with NTS) of the ES on CD from Environmental Planning Barton Willmore, 7 Soho Square, London W1D 3QB so long as stocks last.

Members of the public may inspect copies of:

- The application.
- The plans.
- The environmental statement.
- Other documents submitted with the application.

at the address given below during all reasonable hours until 17 April, 2014.

Anyone who wishes to make representations about this application should write to the Head of Planning and Transportation at the address given below by 17 April 2014 quoting reference 2014/00228/EAO.

HYSBYSIAD O DAN ERTHYGL 8
Datblygiad arfaethedig yn Land south of Junction 34, M4, Hensol

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Dated / Dyddiedig: 27 March, 2014

M. Goldsworthy
Operational Manager Development & Building Control,
Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry. CF63 4RT

Point-to-Point season gets off to a fine start as Glamorgan Hunt hosts Ystradowen meet

THE point-to-point season kicked off in the Vale last Saturday (March 22) with the Glamorgan Hunt-organised event at Ystradowen.

The stand-out performance on the day came from Ogmore's Nick Williams, who notched up his 150th point-to-point win.

He took the young horse maiden race on *Once In A Lifetime*.

It was a great day too for Tenby rider John Matthias, who crossed the line first in each of the first three races.

For a full report on the day's racing, see Brian Lee on page 37.

Photographs:

All images by Glyn Evans except those marked 'LY' which are by Lauren Yeoman.

PHOTOGRAPHS by **GLYN EVANS**

OTHER PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased by contacting:

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The Glamorgan Hunt took the hounds on a 'parade lap' in between the races. See picture at top of page).

MARIA'S TASTE FOR ADVENTURE LEADS TO A STUNNING NEW WORLD RECORD

EVERYONE likes a bit of adventure in their lives but Maria Leijerstam, from Bonvilston in the Vale, has spent her life taking it much further than average!

by PHILIP IRWIN

It all culminated recently when, in January, after four years of planning, she set a new world record by cycling to the South Pole!

It was an immense effort, and she suffered from more than just the extreme cold, as an injury to her patella (knee cap) meant that she had to continued pedalling through excruciating pain.

TV viewers last week watched Prince Harry and his fellow walkers on the 'Walking with the Wounded' team endure similar hardship at the South Pole, but Maria had a much closer view.

She explained: "To start my cycle ride, I flew in on a Hercules from Cape Town to the Russian Antarctic Station at the South Pole.

"Prince Harry and his walkers were waiting there, because they were flying home on the same plane."

"We spent 10 minutes talking, and he was keen to find out about my challenge – but he was also keen to get home!"

Once Prince Harry had flown out, Maria and her revolutionary ice cycle were taken in a specially adapted truck to the starting point – and then it was up to Maria to make it back – across 650 kilometres of frozen wasteland, very little of which was flat and easy terrain.

Maria explained: "The South Pole is at 3,000 metres, and you have a choice of routes. It's a question of which glacier you choose to ascend."

From the original race to the South Pole between Capt Scott and Amundsen, the choice of route has always been important – and so it was for Maria.

She had rivals as well, two other (male) teams who were aiming to cycle to the Pole but, truth be told, it was no race at all, as Maria's astonishing time of 10 days, 14 hours and 56 minutes totally eclipsed the opposition!

The secret of her success lay in her own determination and in four years of planning. One key factor was the time Maria spent with Inspired Cycle Engineering of Cornwall, the company which designed her cycle.

The design, enabling her to lie back and pedal, helped her cope with the strong winds – very important because the prevailing wind direction was against!

The tricycle design was crucial, giving her much more stability over rough terrain. She also spent a time asking research stations in the area for help in mapping out a route. The Antarctic is not extensively mapped, and it was a question of piecing together a route from partial information from a number of sources.

Planning an Antarctic adventure comes with a great deal of bureaucracy and rules. Maria had a total of three interviews before being granted a visa, and then came the rules governing any Antarctic travel – a mixture of the bizarre and the scary.

For instance, the official advice for anyone going to the area for a time is to have your appendix removed! There is no guarantee, you see, that a surgeon could get to you in time.

Another (very) surprising rule concerns disposing of any waste products that you generate. A radius of 100 km from the South Pole is to be kept 'pure' – and no waste at all can be buried there. Outside the 100km mark, you are allowed to bury waste – both packaging and 'natural'.

It means that the unique environment is protected. Maria explained: "It is a world where nothing lives, and there are no smells at all – just ice and glaciers stretching as far as you can see."

Over the 10 days that Maria was cycling, she was pedalling for up to 17 hours a day, burning 4,000 calories during that time. Food was dried, and so she needed to light a stove and melt ice to prepare it – something that takes several hours – and this leaves little time for unpacking a tent and getting some sleep.

This is where Maria's passion for adventure racing was a huge help. She discovered the sport in her early 20s, while at university, and it combines running, cycling and kayaking over wide areas, frequently over six or seven days, with very limited opportunities for sleep.

Maria explained: "Adventure racing involves teams of four – three boys and a girl. The girl is jokingly known as 'compulsory baggage' but the truth is that we have greater powers of endurance. The boys go off faster but suffer more".

On a typical six-day race, the team will grab about two hours of sleep a night, on average, and in the later stages, sleep-deprivation causes hallucinations!

Surprisingly, Maria was not particularly sporty in school. She played tennis but not much else. However, at university she joined the Officers' Training Corps and discovered she enjoyed testing herself on physical challenges.

She didn't neglect her studies, though, and gained a maths degree, which led to her working for BA Systems on calibrating missile guidance systems.

The adventure racing became a passion, and this has taken her all over the world – from Russia to Patagonia. She is now back in the Vale, managing the family's deer estate in Bonvilston, and promoting her 'mini burn' series of races.

These are mini versions of adventure racing, and are tailored for families, where a family team will cycle, run and kayak in the countryside. Maria says that is a great opportunity for parents to do something active with their children.

Is Maria settled in the Vale now? Well, the Ice Cycle Challenge to the South Pole has left her in debt, so she is aiming to recoup those costs with talks to corporate clients.

However, she is toying with one more big adventure – which is very hush hush at the moment.....

For information on the Burn Series, go to *www.burnseries.co.uk*, and for details of speaking engagements, visit *www.whiteicecycle.com*

A brief Royal Antartic encounter; Maria disembarks her flight and is greeted by an eager Prince Harry, who is looking forward to boarding!

Are you ready for some local family adventures? Then join the Vale's own world record holder, Maria Leijerstam in next week's GEM!

Starting exclusively in next week's GEM, Maria Leijerstam will be setting our readers simple adventures each week that the whole family can take part in, leading up to the summer. Make it your mission to have a calendar full of adventures in 2014. Full details www.burnseries.co.uk/youradventure and see next week's GEM for the first adventure!

New Volvo has plenty of high-tech features

by TIM SAUNDERS

LASER radar sounds like something off a sci-fi thriller but we're actually talking about technology fitted to Volvo cars, those traditionally staid and dull vehicles, favoured by the flat cap brigade.

Today's hip and trendy Volvos are anything but and are packed with sophisticated technology that keeps the brand at the forefront of car design and manufacture. Its laser radar systems are a key ingredient.

I'm testing the V40 D3 R-Design, a performance five-door hatchback and it's fitted with an intelligent yet simple to operate cruise control. As you might expect, this keeps the car travelling at the desired speed but unlike most systems it also measures the distance of the car in front.

This ensures that it keeps the Volvo at a safe distance behind. It does this by automatically braking and accelerating thanks to the information relayed by its clever laser radar.

This distance can be changed from reasonably close to quite far away, depending on driving conditions.

In theory, this is a valuable tool that should mean that the driver can relax. Not so though. My test takes place in torrential downpours and high winds and I discover that the radar is not infallible.

This becomes particularly noticeable while at 70mph round a bend on a dual carriageway. The Volvo is in the outside lane but on approaching the bend there is a car on the inside and the radar picks this up and brakes abruptly, despite there being no cars in front of me. This annoys me and I cancel the function.

On another occasion, we are on a straight road and high winds cause a flashing red warning bar on the driver's side of the dashboard to light up – accompanied by a really loud beep – for absolutely no reason whatsoever. My sleeping children wake up.

The Volvo V40 D3 R-Design

High side winds seem to completely throw the radar and despite there being no traffic in front, the Volvo brakes sharply from 70mph to 50mph.

That said, this cruise control is quite impressive when you bear in mind that it can be set at say, 50mph, and if a sharp incline appears the resulting gear change does not cancel out the cruise control. Often this is the case in many other vehicles.

Another safety feature is the blind spot information system. There's a little light on the inside of the wing mirror that glows red whenever a vehicle appears in the blind spot.

This is useful, because the design is prone to blind spots, especially at the rear making it a little awkward to reverse but there are helpful sensors fitted that bleep to alert the driver of nearby obstacles.

As a driver's car, the Volvo is engaging and the R-Design model, which comes with big alloys, a smooth power delivery for a diesel and a low chassis, corners really well.

To give it a good run I drive it to Sandbanks, Poole, West Stafford near Dorchester and a lovely little village near Didcot, Oxford. All are places we had not visited before, so why not?

With an average fuel consumption of over 65mpg it will easily cover over 600 miles on its 60-litre tank. It is fitted with engine start/stop. These relatively long journeys in generally heavy lashing rain allow me to experience the car in the worst conditions.

At one point it rains so heavily that even with the wipers on the fastest speed it is impossible to see and thankfully traffic eventually slows to a crawl.

I find the leather sports seats too hard and not supportive enough for my lower back and there is a disappointing lack of a footrest for the driver's left foot. I struggle with operating the heating because both left and right sides of the car are operated from a single dial near the driver – the switch that's incorporated has to be pushed once for left and again for right.

It's all a bit confusing for a simple soul when they're focusing on the road, so luckily my wife is there to operate the more technical things.

The boot is large enough for our single pushchair.

This 150bhp 2-litre diesel is a gutsy car that has enough power when required. Finished to a high standard, the sound of the engine can be heard on tick over, which does alert the occupants to the fact that they're in a diesel.

Facts at a glance: Volvo V40 D3 R-Design, New price: £31,780.

0-60mph: 9.1 secs, Top speed: 130mph, Economy: 65.7mpg, Fuel capacity: 60 litres.

League success for Vale under-12 girls!

THE Vale Dragons under-12 girls team were recently celebrating after two wins on Sunday, March 23, secured the league division two title.

The team, coached by David and Mica Buffin, have developed superbly over the season, having been placed into division two of the under-12 South Wales Girls League in November.

The team has gone on to record an impressive 13 victories, five draws and just one defeat from their 19 games, with one week of the season to go.

This is an excellent achievement for a young team that were only put together in the summer of 2013, and with half the players playing football for the first time.

The club has enjoyed a very strong season at under-12 level, with the under-12 Vale Athletic team winning the Futsal Cup and also competing at the top of division one, which highlights the progress the club is making after just two years in operation.

The club is about the launch its summer recruitment programme for new players and anyone wanting to get involved should contact Luke Williams on 07832 273688 or email valegirlsfc@gmail.com.

More information is available on the club website valegirlsfc.co.uk.

LW

Good day out for JSTKD students!

Back row (left to right): Chris Edwards, Ashton Curnick, Menna Burmingham, Lynne Doel.
Front row (left to right): Rhys Doel, Josh Edwards, Sean Edwards, Harri Burmingham.

STUDENTS from Vale-based JSTKD Martial Arts & Fitness excelled at the recent English Tae Kwon Do Championships held in Worcester.

Ashton Curnick (13), who will be heading with the Welsh team to the European Tae Kwon Do Championships later this month, fought magnificently to win gold, becoming the English champion in the green belt lightweight division.

His Welsh team-mates, Menna Burmingham (10) and Harri Burmingham (nine) also fought well in their respective divisions but missed out on the medals this time around.

Further medal success came from the team's youngest member, Sean Edwards (six) who narrowly missed out on gold after a close-run contest in the final. After a brave battle, he eventually took the silver in the tiny tots yellow belt division.

Rhys Doel (10) who is the current Welsh peewee division champion, moved up to the boys' lightweight red belt category this time. He started strongly, displaying excellent head kicks in the first round but just lost out in the second despite continuing to exhibit some solid skills.

It was a similar story for team mate Josh Edwards who also fought well in the earlier rounds before going out of the tournament.

Not to be outdone, the adults were also determined to make their mark with Lynne Doel winning the silver in the ladies' light heavyweight division. Lynne did particularly well considering she only took up Tae Kwon Do less than two years ago after watching her children train at the club.

Chris Edwards and Simon Morgan, both novices, fought in the men's middleweight division and although doing well, did not progress to the finals.

Joseph Schembri, head instructor, praised his students' achievements, commenting: "The team did brilliantly and we are now looking forward to building on our success at the Welsh Championships in May."

For further details of JSTKD's classes in Barry and throughout the Vale visit www.jstkd.co.uk.

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Barrivale bridge club

LATEST results from Barrivale Bridge Club, March 18:

1st Kay Dyer and Denis Mottram 63.89 per cent; joint 2nd Lyn Matthews and Alan Jones and Irene Thomas and Jane Brook 56.28. Vivien Liles and Hilary Laurence won on handicap.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale; if you would like to join us ring 01446 418380 or 01446 733425, or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm.

MB

We welcome your reports, news and other items of interest - email us at:
gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

THRILLS AND SPILLS AT YSTRADOWEN!

THERE were plenty of spills and thrills for the huge crowd at the Glamorgan Hunt Point-To-Point Steeplechases at Ystradowen on Saturday where Ogmore's Nick Williams rode his 150th winner between-the-flags (*see pictures on page 34*).

Nick took the young horse maiden race on *Once In A Lifetime*, a six-year-old bay gelding which won by one-and-a-half lengths from *Our Difference*.

Williams, who has also ridden plenty of winners under rules, won the Horse & Hound Cup at Stratford on *Torduff Express* in 2004 two years after his older brother Christian had been successful on *Primaticcio* in 2002.

The first three races all went to Tenby's John Mathias. He won on *CanSheTrain* (Members), *Brooklyn Heights* (Aged Maiden) and *Captain Scarlett* (Confined). Robert Jones' *CanSheTrain* was an easy winner but both *Brooklyn Heights* and *Captain Scarlett* could be considered lucky winners.

Brooklyn Heights was behind *Barney Dunne* (Bradley Gibbs) who looked to have his race in the bag, only to stumble at the last fence and *Captain Scarlett* looked beaten when *PatrickTom Boru*, who led going to the last, collided with a marker. *PatrickTom Boru's* rider, Evan David, was airlifted to hospital.

Amber Griffiths is the trainer of *CanSheTrain* and *Brooklyn Heights* but *Captain Scarlett* is trained by Wick's Robbie Llewellyn for his father Gary, who was visiting the winner's enclosure for the first time in around 10 years.

Kris Hanmer, aged 23, who rides out for Aberthin's Tim Vaughan, won the mixed open race on Andrew Quick's grey *Sangfroid* a former inmate of Tim Vaughan's yard.

Sangfroid, who is not the easiest of rides, won by two lengths from the favourite *Cock Of The Rock* and his rider did well to win on him as the horse has been awarded the infamous Timeform squiggle – which means he is unreliable.

Mr Quick, mine host of The Greendown Inn, is also to be congratulated on getting the 10-year-old back to his winning ways. He says the horse will now run in the Bonhams Hunter Chase at Cheltenham on April 30.

Pyle's David Brace OBE, who owns *Cock Of The Rock*, saw his promising home-bred five-year-old *Dbobe*, well ridden by Bradley Gibbs, win the restricted race by two lengths from Neighbours Lady.

RESULTS:

Members: CanSheTrain (John Mathias) 5-1; Young Horse Maiden: Brooklyn Heights (John Mathais) 2-1; Confined:Captain Scarlett (John Mathias) 16-1; Mixed Open: Sangfroid (Kris Hanmer) 7-1; Restricted: Dbobe (Bradley Gibbs) 4-1 co-favourite; Maiden: Once In A Lifetime (Nick Williams) 9-4 favourite.

The Monmouthshire Hunt Point-To-Point Steeplechases take place at Llanvapley this Saturday (first race 1pm); racegoers should note that the first of the two pony races will be run at 11am.

BRIAN LEE

Petanque season starts with triples

THE Stuart Clarke Cup triples competition opened the 2014 petanque season on Sunday, March 15, at the Wenvoe PC.

Congratulations to the winning team RBB, comprising Jean-Yves Robic (Penarth PC), Phil Bradshaw and Ian Bailey (both of the Monkstone Inn PC), who won all six of their games to take this year's Stuart Clarke Cup.

In second place were the team of Gemma Foster, Jake Caston (both of the Wheatsheaf PC) and Bob Pugh (Wenvoe PC).

A special congratulations must go to the team of Valerie and Robert Falconer and John Thorn (all from the Penarth PC) who finished third after beating some extremely experienced teams.

It was good to see some new faces taking part in the competition, especially a team from Monmouth PC.

The National Veterans' Championship took place on Sunday, March 23, again at the Wenvoe PC. The winners of this year's National Championship will be invited to represent Wales at the European Veterans' Championship in Lulelå, Sweden, between June 27/28.

Everyone is welcome to come and watch and learn more about this great sport.

JS

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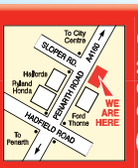

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Cowbridge defeated in ill-tempered encounter

LAST Saturday, Cowbridge travelled north of Pontypridd to take on third placed Glyncoch and on a soggy pitch they went down by 24-5.

After 27 minutes, Cowbridge had given as good as they got, but in the process had kicked away a good chance and dropped another.

Glyncoch's big pack struck twice in just four minutes with a driving line out putting their No 6 over for a try followed by their prop being on the end of a pass.

The referee was to issue an extraordinary seven yellow cards, with Glyncoch picking up the first, and within two minutes Glyncoch had two more players sinbinned.

Just before halftime Cowbridge moved their scrum forward for No 8 Ryan Hall to touch down for an unconverted try to make the halftime score 12-5. In this half, hooker Connor Boys stood out for his superb tackling.

With their player numbers restored, Glyncoch's replacement flanker touched down after 10 minutes, and three minutes later, after a good break by their full back, their centre crossed - but Glyncoch weren't to score again.

Hall was replaced by Rhod Walker and minutes later Rhys Price came on for young flanker Connor Wyatt. Alex Jones was doing all he could to get Cowbridge another score and a great dodging run followed by acceleration took Cowbridge away from their line and 55 metres up the right wing through Jamie Picton-Turberville.

There was another yellow for Glyncoch before Cowbridge lost centre Nick Davies for what was said to be a deliberate knock on.

Just before the end, after a good shift, second row Geraint Thomas made way for Mike Gully.

Right at the end, Jones went past his opposite number again; another player didn't like that and so ran at Jones who expressed his displeasure and both were yellow carded before the referee blew up for full time.

With more belief the score could have been a lot closer. It was good to see Hall, Price and Gully back in action after long spells out through injury, and each looked in good condition.

This Saturday is a critical game against Barry. Barry are on a good run but we are at home and must give everything before travelling away to Bryncethin on April 1 and then visiting Club Caerdydd on April 5; all players are asked to make themselves available for this Saturday.

The youth are also in action against Taffs Well, so please come down and join us for a pint afterwards, your support is much needed and appreciated. **RV/RK**

Bowl joy for Llantwit

LLANTWIT MAJOR RFC welcomed near neighbours Pyle in the SWALEC Bowl quarter final.

Pyle struck first with a penalty to take the lead but this was soon cancelled out by a penalty from the siege gun boot of Ryan Evans.

Pyle increased their lead with two further penalties against one for Ryan Evans to leave the score at halftime 9-6 to Pyle.

Ryan Evans nailed two penalties to take Llantwit into the lead but Pyle went 16-12 clear with a try.

Two penalties for Ryan Evans allowed Llantwit to sneak into the lead before Marcus Pearces queezed over in the corner to give Llantwit a bit of breathing space.

Pyle managed to cross for their second try which went unconverted to leave Llantwit leading 23 -21 going into the last minutes of the game but another converted try for Llantwit saw the game out, the final score Llantwit Major 30, Pyle 21. **NE**

Cowbridge darts league round-up

ON Tuesday, March 18, there was another full programme of league matches.

The Farmers Arms lost 2-7 to the Edmondes B and Llanharry defeated the Hare and Hounds 8-1, Rob McCaver hitting a 180 in that match on his way to gaining the only point for Hare and Hounds.

The Edmondes C beat the Old Post Ladies 7-2, the Star Inn lost 3-6 to the Cross Inn and the Edmondes A lost 4-5 to the Highwayman Inn.

So the league standings after 15 matches, are: Llanharry (121 points), Edmondes B (103), Edmondes C (70), Cross Inn (69), Hare and Hounds (67), Edmondes A (66), Farmers Arms (61), Highwayman Inn (59), Old Post Ladies (34), The Star Inn (25).

The next matches are on Tuesday, April 1, when there is another full programme of league matches. The Edmondes B hosts the Edmondes C, the Farmers Arms hosts the Star Inn, the Old Post Ladies hosts the Edmondes A, the Cross Inn hosts Llanharry, while the Highwayman Inn hosts the Hare and Hounds. The first matches start at 8.30pm and spectators are welcome

For further information e-mail Paul at cowbridgedarts@gmail.com, up-to-date information can be found on the website: www.darts.apsn.co.uk.

It is time to start thinking about next season! If a group of you is interested in forming a team (six players minimum) and your local pub is willing to host you, get in touch and register your interest. **PJT**

COWBRIDGE JUNIOR RUGBY ROUND-UP

DURING a Sunday morning when we experienced all four seasons in an hour, Cowbridge under-13s produced their best display of the season to win their Blues Cup quarter final at home against Llanishen.

Cowbridge were down to a squad of only 16 players, but each and every one played their part to produce a game of the highest level for 12/13 year old boys.

The boys played against the fierce wind in the first half and put themselves under pressure from the kick off with clearing kicks not getting the required distance. It was from a clearing kick that Llanishen opened the scoring.

The Llanishen full back gathered the ball just inside his own half, sidestepped the fast approaching Cowbridge back line, and outpaced the covering defence to score in the far right hand corner.

Behind their own line, Cowbridge kept calm and motivated each other to make a difference at the restart. The Llanishen winger knocked the restart on to give Cowbridge their first attacking opportunity.

From the scrum Evan Thomas put a subtle but very effective soft pass in to Dan O'Sullivan who broke through the Llanishen first line of defence. With only the full back to beat O'Sullivan stepped off his right, but the Llanishen full back produced a great try saving tackle.

However, Thomas had followed up on his pass to gather and score Cowbridge's opening try wide out on the left. Ioan Williams produced a fantastic conversion from the left five metre line to make it Cowbridge 7, Llanishen 5.

This response seemed to galvanise the Cowbridge team into some of the best rugby the boys have produced all season. The boys were offloading in the tackle when appropriate, and setting the ball up when nothing was on.

Cowbridge's second try came from a scrum just inside their own-half. I.Williams ran blind and set his left winger Jack Dixon off on an amazing run. Dixon offloaded to Ben Jones, the Cowbridge open side flanker, who charged for the line taking a number of Llanishen defenders with him.

Jones was brought down five metres from the line, but fantastic support from the Cowbridge prop Jack Little allowed the prop to score his second try of the season. I.Williams converted.

With the wind and the hail storms replaced with glorious sunshine the second half was set up for some great running rugby. Llanishen benefited from some poor discipline from Cowbridge, with a number of tap penalties allowing Llanishen deep inside the Cowbridge 22.

Llanishen kept the ball tight and used their considerably larger pack to head their way towards the Cowbridge line. However, a brilliant turnover from Luke Connor, showing his enormous strength, released the pressure from the Cowbridge line. Connor not only managed to rip the ball from the hands of the Llanishen pack, he got the pass away to release his back line.

Harry Ridge got into his stride quickly taking the ball up to the Cowbridge 10 metre line. He timed his pass to perfection, putting Sam Green the Cowbridge right winger clear. Green put his head back and went for the try line, only to be thwarted by another brilliant try saving tackle by the Llanishen full back.

However, from the resulting line out Cowbridge scored the game's decisive try.

Lewis Hawke found Iestyn Fenn at the front of the line out, Williams fed Thomas who had R.Williams the powerful Cowbridge number 8 on his right hand shoulder.

With the Llanishen defence fixed by R.Williams lurking at inside centre Thomas produced a great dummy and ran through the gap in the defence.

With the in-form Llanishen full back to beat, Thomas delivered a superb sidestep to go under the posts for a brilliant solo try. I.Williams converted to take the score to Cowbridge 21, Llanishen 5.

With the game entering its final stages, both teams made some changes. Llanishen replaced their enormous front row player, a testament to the brilliant work Harry Bluck had produced during the game.

Llanishen started to run the ball from anywhere on the park to try and get back into the game. The Cowbridge defence, whether in close contact or out wide, was first class.

From a Llanishen break out, Jones turned the ball over and I.Williams went on another blind side run. This time Williams found Green, who sidestepped his opposite number, and outpaced the covering defence to score Cowbridge's fourth try of the game. Once again I.Williams produced a brilliant conversion,

With minutes remaining, Llanishen, who did not let their heads drop, managed to score the game's last try. Final score Cowbridge 28, Llanishen 10.

Congratulations boys you all produced a stunning performance and you should all feel rightly proud. We look forward to the semi-final with renewed confidence.

GJ

Cowbridge under-10s entertained the touring Exeter Chiefs on the main pitch on Saturday.

The under-10s wanted to play under English rules in readiness for their attendance at the Lexus National Tournament Finals, to be played at Worcester on the weekend of April 12/13, so had to adjust to some rules that they had not played under all season.

The sides agreed to play two matches due to the number of tourists although the home side were with a reduced squad of 13 due to a birthday party within the squad that had taken some of their leading lights away from the fixture.

The Chiefs, buoyed on by a large colourful noisy travelling support, wearing various Indian headdresses, started well in the first game scoring the opening try. Cowbridge were competing well if struggling a little with the ball being ripped in the tackle.

However, a fine run from Finlay Brace splitting the Chiefs defence allowed Cowbridge to go in at halftime on level terms.

The second half was again closely fought, amid a hailstorm, with a typical long run from Finlay Sullivan bringing Cowbridge their second try but Exeter managed to get one back before the end of the half enabling the first game to end in a 2-2 draw.

A completely new Exeter team was introduced in the second game and these fresh legs were thought to have an advantage. However, Cowbridge's commitment on the day was outstanding, particularly in defence, and their ability to carry the ball to bigger opposition.

Ollie Jones, Lewys Robbins, Akka Guwy and Will Ryan were particularly prominent in this regard and it was Will Ryan who open the scoring in the second game, bursting through a couple of tackles to touch down.

A brace of Finlay Sullivan tries, whose pace troubled the visitors defence all day, saw Cowbridge storm into a 3-0 lead at the break. Heavy conditions and a few bumps and bruises were beginning to take their toll on the small Cowbridge squad and Exeter exerted pressure on the home side in the second period, scoring two tries to set up a tense final few minutes. However, it was to the whole side's credit that they dug in and defended manfully to hold on and secure a 3-2 victory.

This was an excellent performance by the side and the coaches were absolutely delighted by the effort and commitment demonstrated by the squad in sometimes difficult conditions.

Squad: Tom Brennan, Alfie Rees, Will Harris, Ethan Francis, Finlay Sullivan, Ifor Rees, Oliver Jones, Steffan Evans, Finlay Brace, Lewys Robbins, Sam Payne, Will Ryan and Akka Guwy.

MF

Cowbridge under-8s travelled to Barry for the Cardiff and Vale District tournament full of optimism after a string of good performances in recent weeks.

Team 1 started magnificently against Llandaff, producing an outstanding display in both defence and attack. Tries in the first half came from Osian Bruce, who ran virtually the length of the pitch to score after a quick pick up; Ioan Phillips who demonstrated superb support play; and James Collingridge, who sliced through the defence with a typically determined run.

Superb tagging meant constant turnovers, and Cowbridge were able to add to their tally thanks to Osian, who scored after his signature switch move with Sam Sheppard. Tries also came from Harry New with a barnstorming run to the corner, and James Lord who broke through after an excellent take. Final score 6-0 to Cowbridge.

The first half of their next game against Llantwit was much tighter, with the scores 2-2 at halftime, both tries coming from Osian after a switch and dummy move.

However Cowbridge piled on the pressure in the second half, running in four unanswered tries, with the boys working hard as a team displaying good support play and passing.

Tries came from Sam Sheppard, James Lord, Harry New, and also from Osian who secured his hat trick. Final score 6-3 to Cowbridge.

Their third game would determine which side would reach the semi-final, and the boys knew the stylish St Peter's would be hard to beat.

Cowbridge were unlucky to concede three tries in the first half but demonstrated great tenacity and character in continually working hard to get back into the game. Joe Davies managed to break through the solid defence with a weaving run to score, but Cowbridge lost 4-1.

Team 2 also produced good performances in their first two games, narrowly losing to St Peters 5-4, with tries coming from Ben Stephenson, Henry Davies, Paddy Whitestone and Ollie Gale.

Ben and Ollie were on hand to score again in their match against CRICC, along with Henry Pugh, which ended in a 6-3 defeat.

The boys then faced a strong Pentrych side and although Joe Funtek opened the scoring for Cowbridge, Pentyrch went on to win 5-1.

Despite not reaching the latter stages of the tournament, the players impressed with their work ethic and indefatigable commitment to the team, and will go with confidence to the London Irish tournament in April. **PS**

Cowbridge bridge club

THE results for Cowbridge and District (Llanblethian) Bridge Club for Tuesday, March 18, were as follows:

1st Anne Hughes and Teri Pollard 65.06%; 2nd Mary Thomas and Dennis Barker 57.95%; 3rd Ann Miller and Judith Nunn 56.82%.

Old Hall Bridge Club held its annual handicap pairs competition over three weeks in February. The winners were Barbara Easterbrook and Margaret Bancroft.

The club meets at 7pm every Wednesday in Old Hall, new members and guests are most welcome. **GR**